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THE
GLORIES OF JESUS

THIRTY MEDITATIONS ON THE
LIFE OF OUR LORD

BY

KARL TIEDEMANN, O. H. C.

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AN OFFERING OF LOVE

TO

JESUS

THE MASTER OF MEDITATION

CONTENTS

	Page
The Annunciation	13
The Visitation	21
The Nativity	28
The Circumcision	34
The Presentation	42
The Visit of the Magi	49
The Flight Into Egypt	56
The Father's Business	63
The Hidden Life	71
The Parting at Nazareth	77
The Baptism	85
The Temptation	90
The First Miracle	98
Jesus and Nicodemus	105
At the Well Sychar	110
The Parables of the Lost	118
Jairus' Daughter	124
The Loaves and Fishes	131
The Walking on the Sea	139
The Transfiguration	146
The Washing of the Feet	152
The Blessed Sacrament	159

Gethsemane 164
The Scourging 173
The Crown of Thorns 180
The Ecce Homo 186
The Crucifixion 193
The Resurrection 200
The Ascension 209
The Vision of Love 215

PRAYERS BEFORE MEDITATION

Veni Creator

COME, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessèd unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soilèd face
With the abundance of Thy grace.
Keep far our foes, give peace at home;
Where Thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Thee, of both, to be but One;
That, through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song:
Praise to Thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

OUR Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, in union with that divine intention wherewith Thou, while upon earth, didst offer up Thy praises unto God, I now offer this meditation unto Thee, ✠ in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYERS AFTER MEDITATION

TO Thee, my God, I offer all the holy thoughts, good intentions, and resolutions which Thou hast deigned to grant me. I place them in Thy pierced Hands, there to glorify Thee forevermore. And unto Thee I offer myself, body, soul, and spirit; to Thee I abandon myself forever. In Thee O Lord, I put my trust.

SOUL of Christ, sanctify me,
Body of Christ, save me,
Blood of Christ, inebriate me,
Water from the side of Christ, wash me,
Passion of Christ, strengthen me,
O good Jesu, hear me,
Within Thy wounds hide me,
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee,
From the malicious enemy defend me,
In the hour of my death call me
And bid me come to Thee,
That with Thy Saints I may praise Thee,
Forever and ever. Amen.

AN EXPLANATION

THE most important part of this book has not been written. It never will be written. It can be supplied only by you and by others who will use this book in meditating. For what is the most important part of a meditation? It is not the use of the memory and imagination, by which you recall and picture the scenes; it is not the understanding, or reasoning faculty working out trains of thought, analyzing the truths of revelation, and tracing out their consequence; but the essence of a meditation lies in the exercise of the will, that glorious gift of God which enables you, after looking at a picture of Jesus, or seeing a virtue of Jesus, or hearing a saying of Jesus, to raise your heart to Jesus in love or holy fear, in joy or contrition, in abandonment and union. It is this exercise of your will which gives its real value to your meditation.

Meditation is not, as many suppose, an exercise peculiar to the philosopher, the theologian, or the scholar. For mental prayer,

in which we include meditation, is within the power of the most ignorant person. This is no new doctrine. Recall St. Bonaventure's vigorous affirmation when Brother Giles asked him: "Can a poor, ignorant old woman love God like Brother Bonaventure?"

It is the heart and will which determine man's destiny, not the memory or the mind. "The mind to analyze, the heart to realize," a wise man taught. In these pages the author has tried to "analyze" for you some of the Glories of Jesus, our God and Saviour. But you must "realize" these scenes for yourself, and let them call out your love. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me," is the key text of the Bible. We have sought to lift up Jesus and His glory before you. Let your soul be drawn to Him in whatever way the Holy Spirit wills.

Many prayers have been indicated in the printed page. But the Holy Spirit is not dependent on written pages; He is ever drawing your heart to Jesus, and dull and tepid would the soul be which spoke in love to its Lord

only when the devotional manual gave such a direction. Yet it would be well to pause at each printed act of prayer. Make it your own; linger over it; recast it, if you like, in your own mode of expression; vivify it with your own heart's love; offer it to God. These acts, when you raise your heart to Jesus, are the life-pulse of your meditation. Perform faithfully the first few devotions that are indicated, and you will soon learn to add many of your own. They will rise spontaneously within you as you look more steadily at Jesus lifted up for you, as you abandon yourself more earnestly to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as you submit more perfectly to the Divine Will, as you are led deeper into the inmost chambers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let the Heart of Jesus draw your heart, let His love compel your love, let His glory inspire your worship. This is the aim and purpose of meditation.

It is you, then, who will complete for yourself this book of meditation. Following these rude plans you are to build up the fair house

of your soul, as a dwelling-place for Jesus. It is you who, by the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit, must make "these dry bones live." And as you gain new inspiration of the love and joy and glory which is in Jesus, as you catch some fresh gleam of the radiant beauty of His Spouse, the Holy Catholic Church, as you are inflamed by the fire of His Sacred Heart, your meditation will bring you

"close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun."

THE GLORIES OF JESUS

THE ANNUNCIATION

Read St. Luke i: 26-38.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

BE very quiet for a few moments. Try to put out of your mind all thoughts save those of God. Remind yourself of His Presence. Say slowly the *Our Father*, the *Veni Creator*, and the *Hail Mary*. God has something to say to you in this meditation. It may be something that the printed page suggests. It may be given to you in a more intimate way. Make an act of trust in His guiding power. Say, "In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust, let me never be confounded." Make, too, an act of love to Him, saying, "Lord Jesus, I love Thee and I want to love Thee more."

I.

Now picture the scene. Do not be surprised at any wandering or distracting thoughts. Each time bring your mind gently and patiently back to God. Turn your eyes to far-away Nazareth of Galilee. It lies in the great plain

of Jezreel, the battle-ground of Israel, and so is a fitting place for the Conqueror of sin to become incarnate. Fifteen hills cluster around, and on the purple slopes of one of them nestles a little village. Its narrow winding streets are piled one above another. See the low flat-roofed houses, their white walls glittering in the bright sunlight. Note the terraced gardens, with their gay flower beds, the gnarled fig trees, the silvery olives, the stately palms. The peace of God is brooding over all. Ask the loving Father to send peace into your heart. "Give peace in our time, O Lord, for it is Thou, Lord, only that makest us dwell in safety."

II.

Peace comes only through obedience to the will of God. Consider Mary's obedience. Look into the little chamber where the holy Virgin is kneeling. She is absorbed in prayer, pondering the Scriptures. Suddenly a bright form flashes before her eyes. It is the archangel Gabriel. Hearken to his words: "Hail, thou that art highly favoured; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." It is the first time that the *Hail Mary* was ever said. Join with the angel in repeating it.

III.

"And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be." It was her marvelous humility which caused Mary to do this. It was as if she had said, "How can I of all women receive such honor?" She thought herself unworthy, the lowest, the least deserving of all the daughters of Israel. Such was the lowliness of the Mother of God. But you, have you ever entertained such humility? Have you never said something like this to yourself?—"Well, I may not be a saint, but I am not worse than others about me." How far are thoughts such as these from those of Blessed Mary!

How then are you to gain humility? Here understand once for all, that you cannot acquire humility by your own efforts. You may perform many humble acts, but they are only external. They do not insure what God alone can bestow. He will give that gift to you only as you are ready to receive it.

Prepare yourself for it by submitting gladly to any humiliating task that may come your way. Do not shrink from accepting humiliations that may befall you. Have you made

some mortifying mistake? Does some one ridicule you? Seize the occasion. It is an opportunity to prepare yourself for the gift of humility. Think of some occasion when this happened, and thank God for it. Say the *Gloria Patri* as an act of thanksgiving.

IV.

Look once more at the Virgin of virgins. The angel reassures her, and proceeds to announce the Incarnation: "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Again Mary wonders: "How shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?" Hers is not a question of doubt but of modest inquiry. She only wonders how this blessed promise can be fulfilled without violation of her holy estate of dedicated maidenhood. What prudence is this! Truly can she be hailed, "Virgin most prudent." Ask her to pray for you, using the *Hail Mary*, or your own words.

Often fair messages come to you. Are they

from God or from Satan? Test them prudently. Are they in conformity with what you know of God, His holiness, His purity, His righteousness? Do they seem to be "the things of Jesus"? Do they savour of the Passion? Can you see the sign of the Cross on them? Ask God to send the spirit of prudence into your heart.

"O my God, I am Thy servant. I desire naught but the things which are Thine. Thine to give, mine to receive. Help me ever to choose aright. O hide me under the shadow of Thy wings, there will I abide in safety evermore!"

V.

Mary sees the Cross in this situation. The angel reassures her, but he cannot hide from her what it may bring to her. She is a Jewish maiden, versed in the Jewish law. She knows that the penalty of adultery is to be stoned to death. There comes before her mind all the suffering and sorrow that this Child-bearing may bring to her. She hears herself hailed as the Mother of Sorrows. In that moment she makes her choice. She makes her act of faith in God's love for her. Rising up in swift obedience she cries: "Behold the handmaid of

the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

Such was the depth of Mary's loving obedience, of her trust in God's love for her. Obedience! It has a harsh, unpleasant sound. Indeed, it is hard, but it is the key to peace, the gate of holiness, the way to God. For consider that, as by the disobedience of the first woman sin entered the world, so by the obedience of Mary God came to overcome sin. The Incarnation followed upon the consent of this maiden. And think too that while, through the disobedience of the first Adam, we are all involved in sin, so by the perfect obedience, the obedience unto death, of the second Adam we all may be made holy. Then praise God for the obedience of Mary. "Blessed art Thou, O my God, and blessed be Mary Thy faithful handmaiden."

VI.

In these meditations you will often be asked to think of sin. Consider then, that all sin arises from a want of trust in God, which leads to disobedience. Go back to the very beginning and consider this step by step.

In the beginning is God. God is all-satisfying. To be with God is the fulness of joy.

God knows this. In His love He wishes to share this joy with others. So He created the angels and said unto them: "Come unto Me and I will fill you with the joy of My countenance." The holy angels took God at His word. They trusted His love for them. The vision of love was so compelling, the vista of happiness so endless, the Face of God so entrancing! They bowed at His feet. They were obedient to His call. Let your heart sing with the angels: "We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord."

But alas, some of the angels refused their obedience. They hated the sovereign claim of God. They rebelled against the thought of dependence. They trusted their own strength. They would not trust Him. So they were cast down from heaven. Make an act of sorrow:

"O Eternal Father, I am heartily sorry for all my disobedience and neglect of Thee who art so good. Forgive me for Jesus' sake and fill me full of love for Thee."

Next, God created man and gave him the same vision of love. To man He said, as He had said to the angels: "Come unto Me and I will fill you with joy." To man also came the choice, and man, like the rebel angels, failed. He would not trust God's love for

him. He, too, was disobedient. Renew your act of contrition for your part in man's disobedience.

This is what the Church means by sin. It is a lack of love for and trust in God. Consider the terrible results of this want of trust and love: sin, sickness, disease, the foul slums, the horrors of war, misery, death. All these have come because man would not trust God.

"O my God, would that all men would trust Thee. Thine they are, for Thou hast made them. O give us all the grace to trust and love Thee and Thee alone. For Thou art our merciful God and our Father."

THE VISITATION

Read St. Luke i: 39-47.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

THINK of the Presence of God in your heart. Make an act of joy that He is there. "My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind so that you may meditate upon the Visitation of our Lady to her cousin Elisabeth. Say the *Veni Creator.* "O Holy Spirit, enlighten my mind and strengthen my will, that I may be able to contemplate the Visit of the Virgin and to enter into her joy." Say the *Our Father* as an act of abandonment to His will. Think of the trust and obedience of Mary. Ask her to pray for you that you may give up your will as she did. Say the *Hail Mary.*

I.

Picture the scene. Mary has just made her great act of obedience, saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." God is incarnate in her. Now is revealed the truth of the saying, "Mary was more blessed in her obedience than in her

Child-bearing," for without waiting for any proof of the angel's words, she hastens to tell Elisabeth of the glad tidings.

See her accompanied by holy Joseph, hurrying into the hill country to Hebron. See the joy in her face, the joy of motherhood. She is the Mother of God. Hasten to join your joy to hers and give thanks for the Incarnation.

"Hail, day of the Incarnation, when God became Man for us. Hail Gabriel, herald of so great joy. Hail glorious Virgin, in whose chaste womb our God took flesh. Hail Love and Joy of God Incarnate. Let me add my joy to thine, O Mother of God."

Watch the holy Mother of God as she hastes into the hill country. See how joyful her journey is. Nothing daunts her, nothing affrights her, for she is the bearer of the Lord. She is faithful to every prompting of the divine will. Why should she fear man or beast! She bears her Lord; can she be other than joyous? It is a parable of her whole life—for all her journey through life, from Nazareth to Calvary, is uphill. And through it all Mary hastens her appointed way, always faithful and trusting, ever rejoicing. Even on Calvary she is resigned, full of confidence in God's will.

Do you haste with joy into the hill country of your life? Your life will not always lie around the quiet-flowing waters of Galilee. Your God will come to you at lowly Nazareth, when you have made your first act of obedience to Him. But He will ask more. He will point to the vision of the hill country, to the narrow, winding road of sterner duties.

Will you tread the way rejoicing? You will, if, like Mary, you trust your God. You will find the journey gladsome if you but recall the Presence of Jesus within you. He is always in your heart. No one can drive Him away but yourself. Nothing can separate you from your God but your sin. Think, then, of His Presence. Lift up your heart to Him in an act of adoring love. "Magnify the Lord."

"O my God, I thank Thee for Thy Presence in my heart. To Thee I cry, to Thee will I offer my heart's love, before Thee will I bow in adoration. O God, Thou art my God, and in Thy Presence is the fulness of joy."

II.

See the meeting of the two Saints, the aged Elisabeth and the holy Virgin Mary. The unborn Baptist leaps in his mother's womb.

Hear the greeting: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" It is the salutation of a mother to a mother. Elisabeth, too, is happy.

Ponder on the joys of home. They are very great. And yet how many miss a large part of the happiness when they do not recognize Jesus in the home. How many homes there are where never a grace is said to Him, seldom a prayer offered to Him. A family is a blessed thing, for it is an image of the Holy Trinity. But how much more does a home reflect God when the love of Jesus transfigures it! Do you see Jesus in your home? "O little Jesus, present though unseen, fill my life with gladness, fill it full of Thee."

III.

Consider, too, how much of happiness the world loses by not seeing Jesus in the midst of it. And yet happiness is what the world longs for, it is what you yourself crave. The great loving heart of the Father has provided so many causes of happiness. There is the joy of *life*. It is such a wonderful thing just to be alive, to breathe and think and love.

Health is given to many of you. Is it not a cause for joy? And some of you are visited with pain, the blessed "gift of pain," the sharing of the physical side of the Passion. This should be a cause of rejoicing. Praise God for the gift of life.

Again, there is the joy which the beauties of Nature bring; the roaring avalanche, Niagara's flood, the thrill of soaring cliff and jagged mountain peak, the soft blue shadows laid across the sparkling snow, the riot of red and gold in the flush of autumn. All this is very heart-gladdening. Praise God for His beautiful world.

Deeper still are the joys of friendship. How good it is to sit beside the fire with a friend, and build air-castles in the golden flames. Or, if you know your friend very intimately, to sit in the silence in which heart speaks to heart. Think of how your friends have blessed you, made you stronger and holier. When Charles Kingsley was asked what was the secret of his life, he answered, "I had a friend." Thank God for your friends.

And thank Him for your Friend of friends, Jesus. For the point of this meditation is to tell you that if you took all that joy and hap-

piness, the joy of life, the joy of nature, the joy of recreation, the joy of human friendship and love, and fused them all together into one great joy, and multiplied it a thousand-fold, and then a thousand thousand-fold, you would have a faint symbol of the joy of having Jesus in your heart. He alone can satisfy, for He is the Joy of the Father. To be with Jesus all the day, to talk to Him of your life and work, to ponder on His Presence,—this is joy, the very joy of heaven itself, for heaven is the complete realization of the Presence of Jesus. Make an act of joy that Jesus is in your heart. Join your happiness to Mary's. "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

IV.

Men sing when they are happy. And the great lesson that all must learn is this lesson of the joy of possessing Jesus. It always begins as Mary's did, in obedience. You, too, must learn to say, "Behold the servant of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And the next step is to go into the hill country of your life. Go as Mary went, obediently, confidently, joyously. Sing as you go. The true Christian is always rejoicing. The religion of Jesus is pre-eminently the religion of Joy.

Have you found that joy? Do not say, "Where is His joy, where is His beauty? I see nothing but sorrow and pain. I look for Him and find only an endless line of crosses stretching away to the far horizon."

But Jesus *can* help you! More than that, He *wants* to help you. He loves all souls. He died to save your soul! Only you must come to Him. Just come into His Presence and, unborn as you are to the fullness of His love, you will leap as did the Baptist at the thrill of it. Only come to Him! Lay your life at His feet. Say to Him, "Be it unto me according to Thy word." And He will come into your heart. Put your new-found love into action by taking up your cross. And you will find yourself singing *Magnificat* with Blessed Mary.

"My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple tree
Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these,
Because my Love is come to me."*

*Christina Rossetti.

THE NATIVITY

Read St. Luke ii: 1-20.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

PUT out of your mind all thought save that of God. Listen for His voice. He wants to tell you something to-day, a word of love, or of encouragement, or perhaps of tender rebuke. Say the *Veni Creator*, that the Holy Spirit may enlighten your mind. But you must abandon yourself to the divine will, or you will not profit by the inspiration of the Spirit. Repeat, then, the *Our Father*, saying very fervently the words, "Thy will be done." Say the *Hail Mary*, that you may be given the obedience and trust of Blessed Mary.

I.

Think now, of the birth of Jesus. Imagine yourself a member of the Holy Family. You have no sooner done so than a great sense of unworthiness sweeps over you. A brother of Jesus! Yet is not this your true relation? Are you not called to be one of "the Lord's brethren"? What is it that separates you from these blessed Saints? Hasten to make an act of sorrow for your lack of love. Say

the act of contrition: "My God, I am sorry that I have sinned against Thee who art so good. Forgive me for Jesus' sake and I will try to sin no more."

Now, purified in will, enter the little cave where the Saviour has just been born. Mary, Ever-Virgin, bends over the manger, where, in the yellow straw, lies the Holy Babe asleep. He is wrapped round with swaddling bands. On the other side of the crib kneels St. Joseph, tenderly watching the Mother and her Child. At the back of the cave stand the ox and the ass, silent. And, if you have eyes to see them, there are throngs of shining ones crowding round. They are very still, with a tense stillness. Yet they are pouring out a flood of love and worship. Join with them and make acts of love to the Babe, saying again and again His Sacred Name.

II.

"We love Him because He first loved us." Think of the great love of Jesus for you. Why is it that Jesus is born? Is not one of the reasons because He craves *your* love? His delights are to be with the sons of men. He wants to be with you, so great is His love for you. He sees that the only way in which

to win your love is to come and share your life here on earth.

You remember the story of a Prince who had everything to make him happy. There was the great castle with its long, tapestried corridors with soft rushes underfoot, and great square rooms filled with armor and the trophies of the chase. Before the roaring fires of a winter's night, the wandering minstrel would sing his songs of chivalry and love.

But he wearied of the minstrel's songs about love. He wanted love itself. So it was that, as the Prince and his court were out hawking of an autumn day, they passed a humble cottage where a peasant maid was at work. She was very beautiful, and the Prince loved her. No one guessed his secret, but the next day there knocked at the door of the cottage a young wood-cutter, asking for work. It was the Prince, who loved the peasant maid. In that narrow home he shared her life. There he wooed and won her.

It is a fairy story. Yet there is a great truth in it, the truth of the craving of a human heart for love. The perfect manifestation of that truth is to be found in the Sacred Heart of the Babe of Bethlehem. He is tired of idle assurances of devotion. He is tired of prayers

that are merely words. So He has come to claim your love like the fairy Prince by sharing the life of His beloved. That is why He, the Prince of the House of David, is lying, not in a splendid palace, but in the cold manger. He wants to share your life in order to claim your love. Your acts of love, are they real, fervent, loving? To you He stretches out His little arms. Your heart He craves. Make, then, a fervent act of love to the Christ-Child. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." "O Jesus, I love Thee and I want to love Thee more."

III.

But hark! There is a knocking at the door. At first no one hears. It comes again, this time louder, more insistent.

The shepherds file in, their dogs at their heels, and kneel at the crib. They gaze on Jesus, then they fall on their faces in long and silent adoration. Overhead the shining ones are singing the "Thrice-Holy," while a haze of incense silvers all the air. Make an act of worship. Say the *Sanctus* with them, slowly and lovingly. "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy Glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high, Amen."

IV.

What did they offer, these shepherds? What Christmas gifts did they bring to Him who was the "Unspeakable Gift"? Their gifts were vaster and more precious than many a costly offering. They gave themselves. You, too, have given your loved ones many a Christmas present. Often these gifts have cost you much. Have you given the Christ-Child the present He craves? There is one gift for which He longs. It is yourself. He wants you, your heart, your mind, your will. You may have given Him much, but there is always more to give. Perhaps He wants you to give yourself to Him in the priesthood, the Religious Life, or in the mission field. Or if the way of your vocation is made plain and you have accepted it, you may still give more of your will, more of your heart, more of your love. Kneel, then, at His crib and offer yourself, your hopes, your dreams, your desires, your plans. Offer all your joys and pleasures and happiness; your griefs and pains and disappointments. Give your all, for He craves you and your love.

"O little Jesus, lover of my soul, I give myself to Thee forever. Take me and make

me wholly Thine. Be it unto me according to Thy word."

V.

So the shepherds pay their tribute. The Child awakes and smiles upon them. What a reward! They have given themselves, and have received in return sweetness and joy beyond belief. Such is ever the reward of those who really give themselves. The shepherds go back to their old life, the sheep to be tended, the dogs alert and watchful, the silent stars. But how different is it all now! For now the sheep speak to them of the little Lamb of God. Their night watches remind them of the watchfulness of Mary and Joseph. And the twinkling stars are the smile of the little Child.

It may be so with you. In the early hours of Christmas you, too, "go even unto Bethlehem." In the Mass you offer yourself. In the Communion Someone smiles. You go back to your old humdrum life; the same life, but how different! For the old cares are now sweet vigils beside a manger; the empty place at the table is filled by Another; and over the bleak wastes of life breaks the smile of a Child. Will you live for Him? Say the *Gloria in excelsis.*

THE CIRCUMCISION

Read St. Matthew i: 21 and St. Luke ii: 21.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

REMIND yourself of God's Presence. He is always with you, "nearer than seeing and breathing, closer than hands and feet." He loves you better and more wisely than you love yourself. Make, then, an act of love to Him, saying the *Our Father*. Repeat the *Hail Mary*, asking the prayers of the Blessed Mother. Pray that you may love her Son as she loved Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten your mind, saying the *Veni Creator*. Offer this meditation to Jesus as an act of intercession for all men.

"O Lord Jesus, in union with that divine intention wherewith Thou didst, while upon earth, offer Thy praises to God, I now offer this meditation unto Thee."

I.

On the eighth day our Lord was circumcised and given the name Jesus, "which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb." Meditate on this Name, the Name "which is above every name," the Name which in itself means "Saviour."

Consider, first of all, your need of a Jesus, a Saviour. Think of your sin. It may be that you have not committed any great crime. People think of certain sins as being the blackest of all because they can see the anti-social results of them. They shrink from them as condemned by public opinion crystallized in the law. One who commits murder is likely to be exposed in the newspapers, and have meted out to him the penalty of death.

But there are far more deadly sins which are recorded in the Judgment Book of God, which are seen of none save Him and His Holy Angels. Because they kill only the soul, men do not worry about them. Despair, gossip, vanity, ingratitude, such sins as these men often ignore as being worthy of but small consideration. Yet for some they may be far more deadly than those usually so greatly dreaded. Ask God to make your soul very sensitive to all manner of sin. Dread and hatred of sin go hand in hand with increase in holiness. Make an act of contrition. Own your need of a Saviour. Say, "O Jesus, be to me a Jesus."

II.

Beside this dark horde of sin place the Christ-Child. Against all this disobedience

place the perfect obedience of the Saviour. He comes to-day to make His first act of obedience. Out of deference to the Law which He came to fulfill He will be circumcised. Because of His love for you He will shed His Precious Blood, which alone can blot out sin. For your sake He takes the Name of Jesus, Saviour. Give thanks for His redeeming love, for His perfect obedience, for His Holy Name. He loved *you* and gave Himself for *you*. Rejoice in the Lord and joy in your God Jesus who redeems you with His Precious Blood, with His perfect obedience.

"We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee; because by Thy Precious Blood Thou hast redeemed the world."

III.

So at the Circumcision Jesus began His work of salvation. It began in love and obedience and pain, it ended in love and obedience and pain. By His perfect conformity to the Father's will, the Saviour has brought life and immortality to light. There is no other salvation save in the Name of Jesus. The way is open, the road to Heaven clear. It needs but the co-operation of your will to give you the passport of the King's highway.

What is that surety but the Name of Jesus, signed in Blood? Make an entire offering of your will to God, together with the merit of this wonderful obedience of Jesus, resigning yourself and your whole life into the hands of the Father. Just wherein have you been disobedient, resentful, or unloving? Offer all to Jesus. Then can you cry with absolute confidence and entire trust, "Save me, O God, for Thy Name's sake." Protest your submission, and your claim to the protection of His holy Name:

"O God, my God, save me for Thy Name's sake. Lo, I come to do Thy will. Before Thy Feet I kneel with all the submission I can give. I give myself and my all. Save me not for my sake alone, but for Thy Name's sake. If Thou save me not, then is Thy Name sullied, for we are Thy children, and are 'called by Thy Name.' Not selfishly do I plead, but save me for Thy Name's sake, that Thy Holy Name be not dishonoured in me."

IV.

Jesus has redeemed the world, He has made Atonement for your sin. You will be saved for His Name's sake. It matters not how great, how long-lived be your sin, Jesus can

save you if you wish it. Think for your encouragement of the greatness of the most sweet Name of Jesus.

The Name of Jesus is the summary of all that is in Christ our Lord. In this Name are all the perfections that belong to God and all the virtues that can be found in man. Herein is all the divine love and mercy and goodness and power; and on the other hand all human humility, and patience and courage and strength and obedience. Again, here in your Saviour is the power of a master, the skill of a physician, the wisdom of an advocate, the fairness of a judge. Can you not trust yourself to such a Name? Will you not do your part? Will you not give yourself wholly to Jesus? Renew your act of abandonment.

"Jesu, Name all names above;
Jesu, best and dearest;
Jesu, Fount of perfect love,
Holiest, tenderest, nearest;
Jesu, Source of grace completest;
Jesu purest, Jesu sweetest;
Jesu, Well of power divine,
Make me, keep me, seal me Thine."*

*St. Theoctistus, translated by J. M. Neale.

V.

Jesus is the Saviour of the world because He loves all men. But because He loves all, He does not love *you* any the less. He is all yours. This is the secret of holiness, to realize that Jesus is all yours and that you must be all His. "My beloved is mine and I am His." It is very hard to realize that Jesus is all mine and all yours. In Holy Communion He gives Himself wholly to me and wholly to you. He is all yours. Then claim Him as your own. Converse with Him, speak to Him as your own, for there is naught beside Him that you may call yours forever.

"I will love Thee, O my Jesus, forever and with all my heart, for Thou art mine. I will love Thee with all my love, for Thou art my Friend, my Brother, my Spouse, and my Jesus."

VI.

The Feast of the Circumcision is a feast of pain. For it brought pain not only to the Holy Child, but also to the Blessed Mother. She knew the pain that would come to her Babe Whom she loved so much. She knew, too, that He was the Son of God and had no need of circumcision. Yet her love, because

it was so deep and true, would not allow her to spare her Son the suffering of circumcision. Such was her devotion to the will of God. Such was her love for her Child that she courageously brought Him to this rite.

What an example it is for you. How often is it necessary to inflict pain on those you love! If your love be little, you will spare your loved one. But if your affection be one with the love of Jesus, you will courageously follow the Blessed Mother's example. If you love truly, you will be called upon to give pain to others. Consider this when you are tempted of Satan to send your son along the easier path. Consider this when your friend asks of you a sacrifice.

And remember this scene above all when the loving heart of the Father sends pain into your life. He sends it because of His love for you. Consider this feast when you are tempted to think that God's loving correction is unjust or heartless. Because God is a loving Father, because Jesus is a tender Saviour, because the Holy Spirit would have you filled with the Spirit of Jesus and do the things of Jesus, pain is sent into your life.

When the suffering comes, think of the Holy Mother steeling herself to bring her Babe to

suffering. In that hour ask the Mother of Sorrows to pray for you. Never was there a mother's heart like her heart. Never was there a parent's sorrow like her sorrow, both now and at the Cross. "Behold and see," she cries, "if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Ask her prayers, think deeply on her pain to-day, and your pain, if united to the suffering of Jesus, will be blessed. Say the *Hail Mary.*

"Mother, who with love o'erflowest,
I would know the grief thou knowest,
I would learn to mourn with thee;
I would raise my heart's devotion
Unto Christ, with pure emotion,
So accepted may I be."

THE PRESENTATION

Read St. Luke ii: 22-35.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

REMIND yourself of the Presence of God our Lord. He is at the right hand of the Father; He is in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; He is in your heart. But whatever His mode of presence, it is always the same Jesus, the Eternal Word of God. Make an act of worship to Him, saying *Our Father*. His is "the kingdom and the power and the glory." You may see His glory if you give yourself wholly to Him. Ask Blessed Mary to pray that you give yourself as she did. Say the *Hail Mary*. Now repeat the *Veni Creator* that the Holy Spirit may take of the things of Jesus and show them unto you.

I.

The Presentation is also called the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, the joyful celebration of the day when Mary came into the Temple. She came for the purification which the Jewish law required of a mother after the birth of a child, and she came to present her Son to God. Legally these ceremonies might

be performed separately, but, when practicable, the presentation of the child and the purification of the mother were combined. So it was with the Blessed Virgin and her Child. And such should be the case with you. She who was perfectly obedient needed no purification, but you, with your many acts of disobedience, require a constant purification of heart and will. In the spiritual world, presentation and purification always go together. You may not give yourself to Jesus unless you have purified your heart. It is only the pure in heart who see God.

II.

Picture, now, our Lady going into the Temple with our little Lord in her arms. St. Joseph is by her side. The trumpet is sounding the signal that incense is about to be offered at the great golden altar, and that all who are to be purified should draw near. Slowly the Blessed Virgin ascends the fifteen steps that lead from the Court of the Women to that of Israel. At the top of the broad staircase, before the great Nicanor gate, she takes her stand, as near as possible to the sanctuary. The white cloud of incense rises column-like into the blue sky. Hear the solemn tones of

the Thrice-Holy chanted by the choir of Levites. Let the worship of God stir your heart. Join yourself to Blessed Mary and say the *Sanctus*.

"Thou art greater than all our praise, O my God; and in this I rejoice, that whatsoever homage created beings strive to offer Thee, yet it falls far short of what is due Thee, O my God."

III.

And now the service for all in common is over, and only those remain who have a special offering to make. Among them lingers the Virgin Mother with her Babe. Now that the legal purification is over, she may make the offering demanded by the law, and the Child is returned to her. Such was the law's demand on the Jewish mother of old. It makes no such demand upon you. For a new law has come into force; it is the Law of Love. This is the only thing that our Lord commands,—to love. There is only one price that you can pay that will bring your Saviour to you. That price is love. Love of you brought God to you; let love for God now bring you to Him. But how are you to secure this love in order to give it to Him? A great price must be paid

for it. Love of you cost God His death. What is your love of God to cost you? St. Augustine says: *Pretium caritatis tu*,—"The price of love is thyself." God wants "not yours, but you," as St. Paul says.

Say the prayer of St. Francis: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, that the fiery and sweet strength of Thy Love may withdraw our souls from all things under heaven; that we may die for the love of Thy Love, as Thou didst die for the love of our love." And with St. Francis say the prayer he repeated all one night, "My God and my all."

IV.

Mary paid much more than the offering required by the law. Even at this moment across her joy the shadow of the cross was falling. For now the venerable Simeon approaches. See him as he takes the young Child in his arms and sings his *Nunc Dimittis*. The whole history of Christ is passing before the inner vision of the aged seer. This Infant is to be a Stone of decision, set for the rising and falling of many; a Sign spoken against. And the sword of sorrow must pierce through "the most sweet soul of the glorious Virgin-Mother Mary." Such is the price that the

Mother of God must pay, that of seeing her Son an outcast, condemned as a malefactor on a cross, and she not able to help Him. Such were the sorrows of Mary.

And in some such way will you have to pay the price. It may be that some child of yours may bring you great sorrow; your heart may be transfixed. You must learn to follow in Mary's steps. You must make your offering, you must give up your loved one to receive him again. Does a vocation call him? Is he setting his feet in other paths than those which you had planned? Do you feel the anguish of separation? So did Mary. But the same loving Father who looked down upon her sacrifice will bless you in your sacrifice. Just what is the sacrifice God is asking of you? Say three times, "Thy will be done."

V.

Simeon had been "waiting for the consolation of Israel." He had spent his life in fervent prayer, looking for the coming of the Lord. Like Moses he had often cried: "Show me thy glory." Like the spouse in the Song of Songs was his prayer: "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest." And his petition had been granted. He could

say: "Mine eyes have seen." His eyes had seen because his heart had desired.

Desire for Jesus! This is another measure of your love. How much do you want Jesus? It may be that you do not want Him at all in your life. But still He will call to you. Still He will stretch out His little arms to you. Take Him that you may sing your *Nunc Dimittis*. Or, again, you may want Him to-morrow but not to-day. Augustine the sinner said: "Lord, make me pure, but not to-day." Augustine the Saint cried: "Restless is my heart until it rest in Thee." You must desire Him to-day, for to-morrow may never come. Do you want Him only a little? Then you can only in a small measure receive Him. Remember the definition of St. Bernard: "The measure of love is to love without measure." Is your only complaint: "Why is He so slow in coming?" He *will* come. It may be that to-morrow, when you are in the Temple, when you are at Holy Mass, as the bell rings and you bow your head in adoration, it may be as though the Blessed Mother came and put her Child into your arms. That will mean a sweet Communion.

Persevere in your Communions, in your prayers, in your carrying of the cross, in your

desire for Jesus—Jesus in joy, Jesus in sorrow, Jesus only, Jesus always. Only persevere. And some day the clouds of glory will roll round you, the sound of distant singing, the shout of the redeemed will be in your ears, the perfume of His Presence will steal over you, and His Face will break upon you as He takes you up in His arms, while a thousand trumpets echo your *Nunc Dimittis*. Will you persevere?

"Jesus, Jesus, come to me,
O how much I sigh for Thee!
Come, Thou of all friends the best,
Take possession of my breast.
Comfort my poor soul distressed,
Come and dwell within my breast,
O, how oft I sigh for Thee,
Jesus, Jesus come to me!"

THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

Read St. Matthew ii: 1-12.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

SAY the *Veni Creator* that you may be guided in your meditation. Make an act of abandonment in the repeating of the *Our Father*. "Thy yoke, O Lord, is sweet and Thy burden is light; grant that I may joyfully bear it, denying myself and carrying my cross after Thee, O Jesu, my merciful Saviour." Ask Holy Mary to pray for you that you may give yourself as she did to the will of God. Say the *Hail Mary*. You are about to think of the visit of the Magi. Make an act of hope that you may see the Babe of Bethlehem.

"O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man that hopeth in Thee. By Thee I shall be delivered from all my temptations, and attain at last to see Thee as Thou art. In Thee, O Jesu, do I place all my hope."

I.

Think, first, of the prophecies of the coming of the kings. Many years before Isaiah had spoken of the Servant who should be raised up for "a Light to lighten the Gentiles." "Gen-

tiles shall come to Thy Light and Kings to the brightness of Thy rising. . . . All they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense" (Isaiah lx: 3, 6). Now the prophecies were fulfilled. The Day Star had arisen, and had shone into the hearts of men. To that Brightness of the Father's Face the Magi had come with their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Make an act of joy in this fulfilment of prophecy. "I rejoice, O Lord, when I read in Thy Scriptures of Thy Coming. What is so joyous as the words which speak of Thy desire to be with the sons of men? Yet there is that which fills me with greater delight, the words which tell of Thine Advent; 'They saw the young Child with Mary His mother.' O Mary, pray that I too may see thee and thy holy Child Jesus."

"Turn and this Child behold,
That very Son, of old
In God's writ foretold,
A maid hath borne."

II.

It seems that the temporary shelter of the stall has been exchanged for the more permanent abode of a house. There the Magi find the Babe and His mother. They find Him for

whom they have hoped. In their joy they fall down and worship Him. See them pouring out rich treasures. They had not thought He would be so lovely. How poor their gifts now seem.

You, too, some day will see Him in the flesh. You, too, will come before Him, your Saviour-God. Will it be a cause of joy to you? Will your heart be full to the breaking with the rapture of seeing Jesus Christ face to face? Or will it be a day of shame to you, an hour of bitterness and despair? Hasten to make an act of hope in Jesus, that you may see Him with joy in the day of His appearing.

"O most merciful Jesu, though I have committed many grievous sins, I hope in Thy mercy, and that Thou of Thy goodness will bring me to the light of Thy countenance and the brightness of Thy rising."

III.

What are the gifts which the wise men brought, and what do they represent? First of all, gold, which is the symbol of love. It is love which you will offer at the cradle-altar of Bethlehem. All true human love you will offer. And more, for you will realize how pitifully small is any offering you can make

from yourself. Reach out for the love of the Godhead. From that Fountain you will draw great torrents of love to pour at His feet. "Deep calleth unto deep," and the full current of the love of the Blessed Trinity will pour through the flood-gates of your heart as a tribute to Him. Make a fervent act of love to your Saviour:

"O that I had a thousand hearts wherewith I might love Thee, my Jesu. O holy and glorious Jesu, fill me with Thyself. Let me pass into Thee that there I may find love wherewith to love Thee, O Jesu, my beloved."

The second gift is frankincense, which symbolizes the divine worship which is offered to Him. Offer, then, the worship of your whole being, body, mind, soul. You were made to worship God. The greater your love for Him, the oftener you will make your act of love to Him. The more freely His love takes possession of your heart, the more you will humble yourself at His feet.

Then will follow a sweet rivalry of love, God exalting you ever higher, your loving and penitent heart humbling you ever lower. It is the only contest allowed you in your relation to God. So will you learn to love and to worship. Rejoice in your abasement; it wit-

nesses to His majesty. Be glad at the knowledge of your worthlessness; it proclaims His holiness. So kneel before Him. Embrace His blessed feet in the arms of your love. Cry, "I have found Him Whom my soul loved; I will hold Him, and will not let Him go."

"Jesu, my Lord, own me as Thy servant, and do Thou alone possess me. Jesu, my Saviour, I worship Thee, for Thou art my Jesu. Jesu, my love, draw me after Thee in bands of Thy love." Say His Holy Name five times.

Lastly, myrrh, which speaks of sorrow and the Cross. Love and worship cannot be perfected save through the Cross. The Cross it is which unlocks all the treasures which you are to offer. What is your cross? Think carefully just what it is, and then offer it, the myrrh along with the gold and incense. Take it up as a treasure which you may present to Him.

"Hail, precious cross, dearest possession of my life. Long have I borne thee, but too late have I learned to love Thee. O good cross, safe and rejoicing I come unto thee, so that thou mayest joyfully receive me, the disciple of Him who hung upon thee."

IV.

"Being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod." Herod was the earthly ruler, the implacable rival and foe of Christ the spiritual ruler. Herod was the symbol of all that is carnal and sinful. Christ is the manifestation of all that is spiritual and holy. More than that, He is all love and holiness. Between these two there can be naught in common, only an age-long strife. That was begun in a garden; the victory was achieved in a garden. The Babe of Bethlehem has conquered. He has made it possible for the world to be saved.

But are you doing your part? He needs the stroke of your sword, the thrust of your lance, the strength of your arm, sustained by His love. On whose side are you? In your youth you dreamed a dream of love and chivalry and honor and devotion. You swore allegiance to the Captain of your salvation. Are you faithful to that dream? Or have you after you had seen the vision of the Christ-Child, after you had offered yourself to Him, gone back again to the world? If you have been unfaithful, make a firm decision to throw yourself on the side of Christ, first asking pardon for your sin.

"Thou, O Lord, art my only good, my life and my all. Have mercy upon me and save me."

V.

Lastly, we are told that the Magi "departed into their own country another way." None of you, when you have found Jesus, can continue the same old way of life. You must find "another way." No longer will the old, indifferent, worldly, sinful way satisfy you. You must strike out a new way. You have a rule of life? Then keep it more faithfully, in spirit as well as in letter. Have you no rule of life? Then seek one. Any spiritual director can suggest a good one. Do not attempt to make one for yourself. You have learned a little of the folly of choosing for self. You have chosen, once and for all time, Jesus and His Holy Religion. If that choice means anything at all to you, it spells "obedience." Resolve, then, to seek God along the new way of obedience to authority, obedience to rule, obedience to Jesus, who for love of you was obedient unto death. Say His holy Name three times. "My Jesus, my Jesus, my Jesus."

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Read St. Matthew ii: 13-18.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

THINK of the Love of God. God loved you so much that He created you, He redeemed you, He called you to Himself, He has blessed you above your fondest hopes. God loves you so much that you needs must love Him. So make an act of love to Him. Then think of God incarnate, think of Him in the way which helps you most, as the Babe of Bethlehem, as the Boy of Nazareth, as the Man on the Cross. When you have brought Him before your inner vision tell Him of your love for Him. "O Beloved of my heart, I love Thee above all things, for Thou surpassest all in beauty and perfection. I love naught but Thee, and all else only in Thee and for Thee. I adore Thy great goodness and I will love Thee forever. O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee." Say now, the *Veni Creator*, the *Our Father*, and the *Hail Mary*.

I.

Angels played a very large part in our Lord's life. There was the angel of the An-

nunciation, the angel who appeared to St. Joseph to reassure him, there were many angels at the Nativity. And now once again an angel tells St. Joseph to "take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt."

So "he took the young Child and His mother by night, and departed into Egypt." The Holy Family fled to the land of the Pharaohs, away from home and its familiar customs, away from friends and loved ones, away from beloved Nazareth and hallowed Bethlehem. How sad and anxious a flight it was, this hurrying to the land of strangers! Yet how sweet, as Joseph led the ass on which sat the Virgin Mother with her Child clasped close to her heart!

Has your heavenly Father ever sent you a call like this? Has He called you to go away from home and friends and live in a strange land? Has it seemed hard to you? Yet it need not be so. For if you are a true Catholic, you believe in the Communion of Saints. You believe that we are all one in Jesus, and, though you are separated in body from home and loved ones, yet in Jesus they are very near. Are they departed from this earthly life? Then they are nearer still. And close beside you, so close that you may talk to them,

are Joseph and the Holy Mother with the Babe in her arms. Speak to them. Say: "St. Joseph, pray for me. Holy Mary, intercede for me. Dear little Jesus, save me and bless me."

II.

There are many beautiful legends about the flight into Egypt. These stories tell us that the holy travellers were cheered on their way by heavenly music. That the wild beasts came to our Lord to pay Him homage and gambolled at his side like lambs; that the hot sand became cool and green with grass, and myriads of flowers sprang up; that the tall palm trees bowed their heads and offered their fruit at His feet; that clear streams of water bubbled up; that the road became shorter, and that the idols fell down as He passed!

But the Church has never sanctioned these legends. Beautiful as they are, the truth is more beautiful still. The pilgrims were friendless and foot-sore. They plodded their weary way over hot wastes of sand. They were chilled by the cold night winds and scorched by the sun. They were hungry and thirsty and weary, and the road seemed unending.

Why should you read all this? That when you are lonely and tired and when your way seems long and useless, and the evil one tempts you to think it is all in vain, you may remember that God was lonely and tired, that His way was very long, that He knows how you feel. Kneel and take the Babe into your arms. Hold Him close to your heart, and you will find that you are not alone, you are no longer weary unto death, your way has ended in Him, and the only thing worth while is the love of the Babe of Bethlehem.

III.

Look now into the little home where the Holy Family lives while in Egypt. They are very poor, and Joseph must work hard to provide for their necessities. See him as at dawn he goes cheerfully to a long day's labor. See the Blessed Mother, working hard to make ends meet. Very often she must lay the Holy Babe on a mat in the corner while she goes and does the housework. She cannot always have Him in her arms; the little hands cannot always be caressing her dear face; she cannot always be on her knees before Him. Yet what a holy life they both lead, the foster-father absent for hours, the Holy Mother busy

at her work. How really are they in spirit always in His presence. How constant are their thoughts of Him, how quickly when duties are over do they run to adore Him.

It should be the same with you. You cannot be always at Holy Communion, you only have time for a few minutes of meditation. Your morning prayers may have to be short. Beware lest one of two evils fall upon you. The first one is that you fall into the error of regarding spiritual exercises, such as prayer, communion, confession, as things separate from your ordinary life. When the meditation is finished, it is too often locked up and put away from the rest of the day, the subject forgotten, the resolution neglected, its value lost. But try to carry the spirit of the meditation with you, make resolutions which you can fulfill in connection with the rest of the day, seek for opportunities to fulfill them. Make now a resolution which you can fulfill to-day. Register it in heaven with an *Our Father*.

IV.

The other danger in trying to carry the spirit of Jesus with you, is that of spiritual vanity and pride. Do not try to make people think you are a saint. Cultivate a sense of

humour in regard to yourself. Who are you to teach others! Let others teach you! Cultivate a sense of naturalness about your religion. Renew the resolution of this meditation. See that it is a matter that you can fulfil to-day, but see to it also that it can be done secretly.

"Jesu, let my soul live to Thee alone. Hide me in Thy Sacred Heart, for there only can I find rest. With Thee is the well of life and in Thy light shall I see light."

V.

Think, now, of the murder of the Innocents. The Magi, warned of God in a dream, had not returned to Herod. The Holy Family was safe in Egypt. The rage of baffled Herod is turned against the children of Bethlehem. He orders an indiscriminate slaughter of all who are two years old and under, hoping that among them the Holy Child will be slain. It is true that the number of them was small—hardly more than twenty at most—but blood is shed, and innocent blood, for Jesus. It is always so. The innocent ever have the privilege of suffering for Jesus. Give glory to God for these first martyrs who were so in deed though not in will. Say the *Gloria Patri.*

You, too, though innocent, will be called upon to suffer for the Name of Jesus. Can you bear the rebukes which may come to you at the hands of others? How hard they are to bear at any time! But when they come from those who to you seem to be acting unjustly, and without any fair cause, can you accept those rebukes lovingly for the sake of Christ, your Saviour?

So, when these rebukes come, keep silence and offer them to Jesus as your act of humility for His sweet sake. Jesus always brings suffering in His train. Some agony you will have to bear, whether you desire to or not. But how much more pleasing to Jesus is the joyful acceptance of unmerited suffering.

"O my Lord, be Thou blessed in all things which may befall me. Fulfil Thy will in me, for nothing which may happen to me is contrary to Thy Love. All will I joyfully bear for Thee, but especially those things which mortify my pride and self-esteem. These will I offer to Thee with a very great love, Who suffered above measure for me."

THE FATHER'S BUSINESS

Read St. Luke ii: 41-50.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

BY a deliberate act of your will, bring home to your soul the Presence of God. You may not be able to *feel* His Presence, but you know that He is with you. Lift up your heart to Him and worship Him. Say the *Sanctus*. Now that you have grasped the fact of God's Presence, say the *Veni Creator*, the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and the Collect for the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

I.

St. Matthew tells us (St. Matthew ii: 19-23) that the Holy Family remained in Egypt until the death of Herod, when an angel told St. Joseph to "take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel." So it was that they came to Nazareth. Here the Child Jesus grew up. We hear nothing more of Him until the visit to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. Let us now consider that journey.

No doubt Jesus had looked forward to it for many years. Perhaps, when He had asked

Mary questions which she could not answer, she would say, "Wait till you go up to Jerusalem." And now they were almost there. Place yourself among the pilgrims. Draw near to Jesus as He approaches the Holy City. Here is Mount Olivet. The travellers quicken their steps, for from its summit may be seen the Temple. Suddenly Mount Moriah flashes into view. The Temple, built on three terraces, splendid in marble and gold, gleams in the light of the sun.

How the sight thrills their hearts! They fall on their knees and break forth anew with ancient chant and psalm, praising the God of Israel. They have seen what their soul desired! Think what your joy will be, when, after years of desire, you gaze on the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem. You, too, will have made a pilgrimage with Jesus. You, too, will look upon the Temple and the Lamb. Make an act of desire:

"When shall I behold Thee, O most beautiful Saviour? When shall I come to Thy dwelling place? When shall I come to appear before Thy Face, when shall I see Thee, the Lamb upon Thy Throne?"

II.

Go now with our Lord into the Temple. Follow the pilgrims as they climb the Mount and enter through the Court of the Gentiles. Splendid gates give entrance to the Court of the Women, the finest being called "the Gate Beautiful." Beyond lies the Court of Israel. But thither Mary may not go, so it is here that she and St. Joseph and Jesus pause and kneel, fervent in their thanksgivings, for God has granted them their heart's desire. God has granted you many a favor, many a blessing. Have you thanked Him? What part of your devotions are given to thanksgiving? Think carefully of some one blessing and say *Gloria Patri* for it.

III.

"And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it." There is nothing very surprising in their ignorance. It was the usual custom for the men and women, while in the same general company, to travel separately. The children went with either party. No doubt St. Joseph said, "The lad is with His mother," and Mary was sure He was with

Joseph. Imagine, then, their consternation when they met at the end of the day's journey. They had lost Jesus!

You, too, may have lost Jesus. Sin may have separated you from Him. But yours need be no frantic, weary search to find Him. You may find Him in a few moments. That is why God gives you the grace of contrition and the Sacrament of Penance, that you may know of a surety where to find Jesus. Have you sinned? Is His Presence removed from you? Turn instantly to Him. Tell Him you are sorry. Then hasten to the Temple and find Him in absolution.

IV.

After three days of weary search they found our Lord in the Temple. Consider the joy of finding Him. How happy they were when they saw His little figure. How impulsively they rushed to Him. "O Mary, blessed art thou in this hour when thou hast found Jesus. O holy Joseph, great is now thy joy." Try to realize their happiness and think how you, too, have known that same joy. Was it some special sin which separated you from Jesus, or was it carelessness, routine, indifference? But how great was your joy when you

found Him again, when you heard the spoken words of absolution.

"With what sorrow did Thy blessed mother seek Thee, with what joy did she find Thee. Grant me never again to lose Thee, but ever with joy to find Thee daily."

V.

But how strangely He greets them. "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Hear the disappointment in His voice. "Wist *ye* not?" Do *you* not understand? If *you* do not understand, how can others? But no. "They understood not the saying which He spake unto them."

"Wist ye not?" Our Lord may be saying this to you. Has He a vocation for you which you are not following? Are you co-operating with Him in the Father's business? The Father has something for you to do. For every soul in the world He has a plan. To every one He has given a share in His great enterprise of love. Are you following His plan or your own? Manual labor, trade, marriage, a learned or artistic profession, the mission field, the priesthood, the Religious Life, —all these and a thousand other vocations are

part of the Father's business. Which one is for you? Pray to know which one to follow. He will surely tell you. Say the *Veni Creator*, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you His will.

VI.

Consider how you are to follow your vocation, how you may co-operate with the Father.

(1) Avoid all singularity. It is true that God has something for you to do which is quite different from what He desires of others. But it is He who makes the difference. Following your vocation does not mean trying to see how different you can be from others. Avoid singularity, mannerisms, eccentricities. Have you any of these? Then resolve to give them up.

(2) Again, avoid the contrary evil, copying others, or you will never conform to the plan God has for you. There is One only you are to imitate,—Jesus Christ, as you find His life and example set forth in the Gospels and in the lives of His Saints. But even here it is not the question, "What would Jesus do?" but, "What does He want *me* to do?" Resolve to look to Jesus only.

(3) Never complain of hardships, your station in life, your employment. All these

things God chose for you as the instruments you are to use in following the vocation He gives you. They are part of His plan for you. Have you so complained? Make an act of sorrow.

"O most merciful Father, open to me Thy tender heart. Take me to Thy favor and forgive me all my sin."

VII.

Consider, now, what you are to do positively about your vocation.

(1) Study God, His love, His mercy, all His characteristics. Meditate on God as He has revealed Himself in Christ. God's dealing with you will be in harmony with all the rest of His nature. As He has treated His Son, so you may expect Him to treat you.

(2) In accordance with the above, look for the cross in your vocation. The mission given to our Lord brought sorrow to Mary and Joseph. Your vocation may bring grief to others. Above all, is the Cross present to *you?* Think of our Lord's Cross. Yours will be like it.

(3) Seek the grace to follow your vocation. Turn to God in constant prayer, in sacraments, in the daily bearing of your cross. Try to live

near to Him, and you need not fear mistaking your vocation.

(4) Lastly, seek advice from some wise guide. The true Catholic is ever distrustful of self, ever ready to hear the voice of God as it comes to him through those by whom He speaks.

THE HIDDEN LIFE

Read St. Luke ii: 51-52.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

PLACE yourself consciously in the Presence of God. Lift up your heart to Him and say the *Our Father*. Speak to God the Holy Spirit in the *Veni Creator*. Ask for the spirit of abandonment which Blessed Mary had. Say the *Hail Mary*. Make an act of sorrow for your sinfulness which renders it so hard for you to see God: "O Saviour most dear, Thou knowest how many evil things I have done. Be merciful unto me and save me." Your sin betrays a lack of love. If you loved perfectly you would not sin. So make an act of love.

"O that I had loved Thee always, O God most holy. Delay not, O my soul, to love thy God; love that Love which loveth thee from everlasting."

I.

After the scene in the Temple nothing is told us of our Lord's childhood. He seems to be doing nothing. A holy Doctor of the Church says, "Take notice that His doing nothing that was wonderful, was in itself a

kind of wonder. As there is power in His actions, so there is power in His retirement and His silence." It is of this retired life that we are now to think. His life is a hidden life. But how much do the words, "Was subject unto them" suggest! Think of Him for a moment as St. Joseph's assistant in the carpenter's shop. Artists delight in giving us pictures of our Lord engaged in manual labor. Around Him lie tools with their gleaming edges, and the works of His craft—a half-finished stool here, a window frame there, the floor covered with shavings. In the midst a young man is bending over His work. That shop is His school. It was there that He was "subject." There He "learned obedience." Jesus might have taught St. Joseph many things. He who had framed the mechanical laws of the universe could have showed His foster-father how to do his work better, quicker, in a more finished way. But He did it in St. Joseph's way. You, too, must learn this lesson. You must learn to be submissive to others. It may be that the work could be done better in your way. But check that desire to instruct others. Learn the hidden life. For obedience is the very key to that inmost shrine of Christian hiddenness.

II.

In the carpenter shop Jesus learned obedience. But consider that He did not learn it as you so often have to learn it, by experiencing the sad results of disobedience. You learn to hate sin by seeing the sorrow which it brings in its train.

But Jesus never was disobedient, because He was incapable of sin. He learned obedience through practising submission to the will of those to whom He was subject. This does not mean that He cannot sympathize with you. He suffered in that He was tempted.

There are three things which cause pain in temptation; the fear of falling, the horror of sin, and the strain on the will. Christ could not fear the first, the fear of falling, because He was not able to fall. But the second, the horror of sin, He felt more than any other, because the horror of sin is more intense as one is more perfect. As our Lord was infinitely perfect, His pain at the presence of sin was infinitely great,—more than we, who are so sinful, can conceive.

Again, the strain on His will was tremendous, for Satan left nothing undone to overcome the Captain of our salvation. So you see that Jesus is all the more sympathetic with

your trials in temptation, because He could not sin. Here, in the carpenter shop, He learned obedience. Here he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." As He increased in love and obedience, He increased in sympathy. Give thanks for the sympathy of Christ. Think of one of your trials, and realize by an act of your will how very much He feels for you.

"O most sweet Child Jesus, Thou didst increase in wisdom and stature and favor with God, and with every advance in obedience Thou didst grow in favor with man and in sympathy with me. O bless me in my trial."

III.

Jesus learned obedience through obeying, through the little acts of obedience of His hidden life. It was not in the doing of great things that He was obedient, but in the little humdrum duties of an obscure hamlet. Here He learned the love and developed the strength which later He exercised in His Ministry and His Passion. You may do the same thing.

Perhaps you sometimes dream of doing heroic deeds, of great suffering, of carrying a great cross. You will never do even the smallest part of these deeds if you neglect the op-

portunities of learning obedience in little things. If you cannot perform a small task, how can you ever meet your passion? Follow Christ's example. Learn obedience in little things. Then, if the will of God sends you greater things, you will be prepared. Just what is your task? How are you performing it?

IV.

"Your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii: 3). Do you wish to choose this text as a motto for your life? You need not, unless you wish. But if you do choose the hidden life, consider carefully what it will mean. Worldly applause will not be yours. You are not to seek fame, but to lie on God's breast, hidden in the mantle of His love. You are not to seek a brilliant career, but to love the secluded life of Nazareth, and there to walk the lonely way of suffering.

Yours will be no martyr's death, but the summing up of little aches and pains and disappointments, "the piecemeal martyrdom of small restraints." No one will guess that you are bearing them. You are not to expect to be popular, but to be unnoticed. You are not to hope to be a leader, but to be forgotten. Others will instruct and correct, you will lis-

ten. Others may express their love for Jesus in outward acts. For you He "shall be as a hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, the shadow of a great rock." Do you desire this life? Do you want to be "hid with Christ in God"? If so, gather up all your hopes and dreams, your joys and sorrows, your desires and ambitions, and lay them at His feet.

"In Thee, O Child of Nazareth, is all my life. Thou art my God, and my lot is in Thy hand, my life at Thy feet, my heart in Thy Heart."

THE PARTING AT NAZARETH

Read St. Matthew x: 34-39 and St. Luke xiv: 26, 27, and 33.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

MAKE an act of the Presence of God. "Thou art about my path, and about my bed: and spiest out all my ways. For lo, there is not a word in my tongue: but Thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether. Whither shall I go then from Thy Spirit: or whither shall I go then from Thy Presence? If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there: if I go down to hell, Thou art there also. If I take the wings of the morning: and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there also shall Thy hand lead me: and Thy right hand shall hold me." Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your meditation. Say the *Veni Creator*. "Enlighten mine understanding, O Lord, that I may know Thee as Thou art, and serve Thee alone." Say the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*.

I.

Our Lord remained at Nazareth for thirty years. What years they were to our Blessed Lady! St. Joseph died during this time and the burden of the little family fell upon our

Lord. But what a home it was! No harsh words, no selfishness, no unkindness, no quarrels, nought but a sweet rivalry as to which could show the most love to the other. There Mary's life unfolded like a lily before the sun.

There His Sacred Heart breathed forth gentleness and tenderness and care to His holy Mother. Is your family like the Holy Family of Nazareth? Is there the same rivalry to give up one to another? Is there the same love of Jesus? Does your family go all together to meet Him in Holy Communion? What are you doing to make your family like the Holy Family of Nazareth?

II.

Think, too, how Jesus loves His Mother. For her sake He was "subject" these thirty years. For her, He the Most High, labored with His hands. For her sake He lived the hidden life. She was all to Him.

"Not Bethlehem nor Nazareth
Without Thy loving care,
Nor Heaven itself a home for Him
Were not His Mother there."*

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*Fr. Tabb.

Jesus loved His Mother. He would have all men love her. But alas, men think that if they would honor Him, they must disregard His Mother. What love have you to the Mother of God? If you do not honor her, as the Saints have honored her, it is all too likely that you will find yourself growing cold in your love to her Son.

It has happened over and over again that as men forget to honor the Mother, their love to her divine Son grows cold. Those who do not believe in the Incarnation begin by dishonoring the "instrument of the Incarnation," Mary, the Ever-Virgin. Make, then, an act of love to Mary.

"Shall we not love thee, Mother dear,
Whom Jesus loves so well,
And, to His glory, year by year,
Thy joy and honor tell?"

III.

Think, now, of the parting at Nazareth. Much as Jesus loved His Mother, He knew that He must leave her. Then comes their last meal together. With what loving thoughts does she prepare it! How brief it seemed! Then comes the last thanksgiving and the farewell. She does not beg Him to stay, to linger

another hour. Joyfully, hiding bravely the heaviness of her heart, she gives Him the last embrace, the last kiss. There are no parting words. Hearts are too full for that.

Now He is off, striding down the street. Leaning against the doorpost for support, she watches Him. Now He pauses to wave a last farewell. He turns a corner and is gone. She re-enters the little room. There is His kit of carpenter's tools, worn brown with the sweat of His hands. She kisses each tool. There is the bench where He sat, the cot where He rested last night. But He is gone. She has given her all. The tears fall fast now. Are they tears of regret? No, she would do it all again if it would help Him in His work.

So Mary gave her Son to you. Have you given yourself to her Son? It may cost you much, tears and agony, but you *will* give yourself, because you, too, love Jesus and wish to sacrifice yourself for Him and His work. Make your act of abandonment very real.

"O Lord Jesus, my King and my God, take me and make me wholly Thine. It is not mine to ask or desire aught but Thee. Take all of me with my stupidity, my blindness, my coldness; but especially, take my whole heart and will. I ask nothing but to be Thine only.

Lord, sinner though I be, let me look upon Thy Face."

IV.

Such were the sorrows of Mary at the parting. Think now of the pain it brought to Jesus. Follow Him as He goes down the narrow street. He is leaving home. As He passes along, the women come to their doors and watch Him, shading their eyes with their hands. They see the set purpose of His face. "Mary's Son is going away," they say to one another.

He is leaving His friends, His home, His Mother. The children playing in the marketplace call to Him, but they cannot stay Him. With a farewell smile and a blessing, He passes on. He must go away from all their warmth of love. The men in the fields straighten up. Some of them hail Him, but He may not linger. He must away; away from old comrades to be the Friend of all men.

Now He can just hear the sounds of their voices, the deep bass of the men, the ripple of the children's laughter. Now, if He would but turn to see it, the village which was His home is but a broken line of roofs against the sky. He is out on the road, alone.

Was it necessary? Yes, it was a part of His

Cross to leave home and kindred and loved ones in order to redeem them and all mankind. He left them to meet them again in a larger life. If He had not left them, He would never have redeemed you.

It may be the same with you. Do you feel a call to the priesthood, to the mission field, to the Religious Life? It means that you must leave home and go among strangers. To leave your loved ones at the Father's call may be your way of making sure of being with them forever. And you, mothers and fathers, are you preventing your sons and daughters from answering the call? You can, perhaps, if you will, but if so, you may lose them forever. Ponder, then, our Lord's parting, our Lady's sending Him away.

"O Lord, my Strength and my Life, be it unto me according to Thy will. Fulfill Thy will in me, for all that Thou doest is righteous. May Thy holy will be done."

V.

Jesus parted with Mary, to meet her again at the wedding feast at Cana. It is a parable of your parting at death from your loved ones, to meet them again at the marriage of the Lamb.

To many, death is full of fears. But the child of God is not afraid of death. To him it is but the final act of obedience. All through his life he has parted from cherished persons or objects at the call of the Father. Each evening, in lying down to rest, he has made an act of filial oblation, offering the day's work and himself to God, and he is not unprepared when he lies down for the last time.

More than this, he welcomes the final call. To him it means final freedom from temptation and possibility of fall. His time of testing will be over. Never again can Satan allure with his subtle wiles. Death, to the faithful Christian, means no more partings; rather, it means that he is going to see his loved ones who have gone before. He is leaving some, but only to meet them and many others again.

Above all, it means that he will see the Face of Him Whom he has longed for, lo these many years. His whole life has been a preparation for this moment. Could anything be happier?

Do you long for the time of your departure? Or, at least have you lost your fear of it? If not, perhaps it is because of some sin for which you have not repented, of a cross you

have not taken up, of a call you have not heeded, of an earthly attachment that you ought to give up. Once more, are you trusting God, are you obedient, are you parting from all things for Him, are you "looking unto Jesus"?

"O my God and my All, let me hear Thy call and give me grace to leave all and follow Thee. May my soul seek nothing but Thee, may it forsake even itself for Thee, may it long after Thee, and be inflamed with Thy love; that, carried out of itself in holy fervor, it may follow Thee in all things. And of Thy mercy grant that in all the partings of this present world I may so put away self-will that I may be received at Thy marriage feast in Heaven."

THE BAPTISM

Read St. Matthew iii: 13-17.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

THINK of God's Presence. When it is vivid to you, say the *Veni Creator* that you may be enabled to consider our Lord's Baptism understandingly. Say the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary* and the Collect for Whitsun Day. Offer up your meditation to God, saying: "O Lord God, look upon the Face of Thy beloved Son, and accept my meditation as an offering for all sinners."

I.

Our Lord's Baptism was at one of the fords of the Jordan. Picture to yourself St. John Baptist clad in his raiment of camel's hair, girt about with a leather belt. Think of him as a gaunt figure with piercing eyes, not "a reed shaken by the wind," but a man of intense conviction, crying: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

About him were a great number of people, many of them men and women of bad repute. With this throng comes the Lord, that, last of them all, He might be baptized. So He would fulfill all righteousness. He, the sinless One,

comes to receive a Baptism which the Baptist says is a baptism of repentance. Truly is He "numbered among the transgressors." What desire to do the Father's will must have been His, willingly to undertake such humiliation. Rightly can He say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God."

Ask yourself some such questions as these: Is my supreme desire to do the Father's will? Am I willing to suffer taunts and ridicule? Have I been ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified? How much has my devotion to righteousness cost me? How faithful am I in my prayers? How searching are my self-examinations? Make an act of contrition for any falling short in these things:

"O Lord Jesus, well-spring of goodness and source of all virtues, Thou didst begin Thy ministry by being baptized of John. What need hadst Thou of a sinner's baptism, Thou, the spotless One? But I had great need of it, for I have sinned. Have mercy upon me, and cleanse me with Thy Precious Blood."

II.

Consider more fully the desire to fulfill all righteousness and to increase in holiness. Are you going about it in anything more than a

haphazard way? Or, if you have a rule, consider that it is not the *having* a rule, but the keeping of it, that counts. Make a resolution to start afresh. You will soon find that you are not so much keeping your rule as that your rule is keeping you; keeping you from occasions of sin, keeping you in the narrow way of holiness.

Observe it well and you will not find it irksome. A rule badly kept is like a loose splint on a broken limb; it chafes and irritates and does more harm than good. Let the resolution be, not only to start again, but to keep the rule as well as you can. Say the *Our Father.*

III.

"But," you may say, "I don't feel any enthusiasm for starting again. I kept my rule for some years and it did help me. But now I feel that I am not getting anywhere. When I first began to make my confessions, they meant much to me. Now they mean so little. I always have the same old sins to acknowledge. I do not feel that I am advancing in holiness."

You have voiced a very common difficulty. The answer is that you are confusing "feelings" and "will." One is apt to depend upon

his "feelings." If he feels good, he thinks he is good; if he feels faith, he thinks he has faith; if he feels converted, he thinks he is converted.

But it makes little difference how he *feels*. The whole question is how he *wills*. You must not depend upon your feelings; on the contrary, spiritual raptures and consolations are to be distrusted, so often are they the work of the devil transforming himself into an angel of light. And how much more loyalty is there in serving Jesus in hours of darkness than when all is sweetness and ease.

In this service of God each moment may require a fresh act of the will. It was so with Jesus hanging on the cross; each second involved a renewed act of obedience. You may not feel that you are advancing toward God, you may not feel a deep love for Jesus. But do you want to love Him? All that Christ asks of you is that you give Him your will. He does the rest. It may be hard, but you can make the sacrifice, and sacrifice is at once the expression and test of your love.

You see, then, that progress in the way of righteousness means doing the will of God; doing it, not for the sake of self and pleasure, but for the sake of principle; that is, for the

sake of God. But note that when a soul has surrendered itself to God purely for His sake, there is always a gracious reward. When you have made the surrender of the will, He always sends a blessing. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love." He did not fail to reward His beloved Son. He will not fail to reward you, if you are in His Son.

But as with Him, so you, too, must be willing to be numbered among sinners. Your discouraged words about your confessions imply that you are tired of being reckoned a sinner. You would prefer being a saint. Of course. But remember that the way to sanctity is a long and hopeless one unless it be pursued for love of Jesus. Are you willing for love of Him to go on, to face the prospect of many more humiliations in doing His will? He humbled Himself, and numbered Himself among sinners for love of you. Will you, too, welcome humiliation for love of Him?

"For ah, the Master is so fair,
His smile so sweet to banished men,
That they who meet it unaware
Can never rest on earth again."

THE TEMPTATION

Read St. Matthew iv: 1-11.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

REMIND yourself vividly of God's Presence. He, the All-loving One, is very near, even in your heart. Unite yourself to the angels and saints, and make an act of love to Him, saying: "I will love Thee, O Lord, after my measure and according to the power Thou hast given me. Though my love be but little, yet will I offer it to Thee."

"Jesu, my Lord, I Thee adore,
O make me love Thee more and more."

Say as an act of abandonment to God the *Our Father*, and ask for our Lady's intercession. Say the *Hail Mary*. Beseech the Holy Ghost to guide you. Say His hymn, *Veni Creator*.

I.

"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." There is much material for meditation in the little word "then". The Baptism had taken place. Jesus had submitted Himself to be numbered among sinners. He had done the

Father's will. He had received a sign of love from the Father. "*Then* was Jesus led." It tells us of the need of perseverance. The fight was just begun. The devil saw Him doing the Father's will, he had heard the divine voice proclaim Him as well-pleasing to the Father's heart, and he hastened to attack Him. Beware, O soul, of your hours of triumph. Temptation follows close, so close that you may fall in the very hour of victory. Put your whole trust in Jesus, lest pride in self make you fall.

"Grant, O my God, that I may put my whole trust in Thee. Grant, O good Jesu, that Thy will may be fulfilled in me wholly and entirely, and as Thou art in the Father and the Father in Thee, so may I be one with Thee in will, in love, and in life. O Holy Spirit, sustain me by Thy breath in the hour of triumph, and let not the evil one have dominion over me."

II.

Picture the scene of the Temptation. It is a desert place apart. Here are no feathery palms, no aspiring cedars, no fruitful olives. Here are only a few stunted bushes. All round about stretches a bleak, barren waste, with rocks piled one upon another in confused

heaps upon the yellow sand. It is a dreary place, devoid of life, dead.

"Sunbeams scorching all the day;
Chilly dew-drops nightly shed;
Prowling beasts about Thy way;
Stones Thy pillow, earth Thy bed."

Amidst this desolation appear two figures. They stand in relentless hostility, one against the Other, the foe of the human race against the Friend of all men. Every soul in the world lives in allegiance to one or the other of these champions. Ask God to make you able to choose aright between the false and the true, between sin and righteousness, between the works of Satan and the works of Christ, between the worship of the world and the worship of God.

"Come, Lord Jesus, dwell in my heart in the fulness of Thy strength, in the perfection of Thy ways, in the holiness of Thy Spirit, and rule over every hostile power in the might of Thy Spirit and the glory of Thy Father."

III.

Would you know how to distinguish between the service of Satan and that of the Saviour? Would you know what is God's will for you and what is Satan's? Then look

for the Cross. The path to Jesus is the way of the Cross. By that royal road of sorrows you must climb to heaven. Look for the sign of the Cross in your life. Thank Jesus for it. As long as you have the Cross you are safe. Satan alone promises a life without it.

"We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee; because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

IV.

Look again at the two antagonists. The eyes of one are hard and cold. Look steadily at them; they waver, they shift, they drop, like the eyes of some wild beast. They are the eyes of Satan, heavy with guilt and disobedience. Look now at the eyes of the Other. They are gentle and loving. And as you look, it is your eyes, perhaps, which waver and shift and drop. Are you, perchance, conscious of guilt and disobedience? Make an act of sorrow for your sin. Think of some one wilful act of disobedience in your past. Say the Act of Contrition: "My God, I am sorry that I have offended Thee, Who art so good; forgive me for Jesus' sake and I will try to sin no more."

What does this parable of the eyes mean? It means that when Satan tempts you to do

wrong, asks you to do that which you know is contrary to God's will for you, you must face him boldly. Do not let him persuade you that you will be doing right to accept his suggestion; that subtle distinctions justify you in doing what would be wrong for others; that you have the right to make yourself an exception to the rule. Face him deliberately. Look at the thing which he is asking you to do. And then answer him as your Lord answered him in the desert. Answer him with a bold, "No." Hear Jesus speaking through you. "Thou shalt not;" "Get thee hence, Satan." Remember that sin is never made any the less evil by giving it polite names. Face your temptation squarely. Let Satan have the answer that God wants you to hurl at him. You can give it, you have the strength to combat Satan and all his hosts of evil. Else, why was Christ tempted? Else, why did Christ die on the Cross?

"Christian, dost thou see them
On the holy ground,
How the troops of Midian
Prowl and prowl around?
Christian, up and smite them,
Counting gain but loss;
Smite them by the merit
Of the Holy Cross."

V.

Satan deceives many a lover of Jesus by telling him that temptation is actually sin. Temptation in itself can never be sin. When your will consents to sin against our Lord, then temptation ceases. You may be tempted all day long, but, provided you do not give the consent of your will, there is no sin.

The question is: "Is your will set towards God and so turned away from Satan?" Evil may assault the fortress of your will as long as you live, but, if you yield not, there is no sin. Does temptation press hard? Then rejoice! It is a good sign. It shows that the devil is troubled about you. He sees that you are trying to love Jesus, and he is bending all his energies to make you fall.

Sin is the yielding of your will to Satan. It is a very terrible thing, for mortal sin, to which venial sin tends, separates you from Christ. Temptation is a good thing, for by temptation Satan shows his fear of you; by temptation you are forced to contend against him; by temptation you exercise your spiritual strength, become proficient in the use of your spiritual weapons, and so grow in the love of God. Just what is your besetting temptation? Set your will firmly to profit by it.

Say: "To-day, God helping me, I will not yield to Satan." Register this resolution by an *Our Father.*

VI.

In the spiritual combat the devil tries to force men to think that when they have made a self-examination as to sin, and have found no instance of wilful disobedience to God,—that is, have found no sin,—it is not because they are really free from sin, but because they have made a poor examen. The devil often tries to make people believe that no day can pass without sin on their part. But what is the use of the Catholic Religion, with its elaborate safeguards of examens and confessions and Communions, unless souls may reach the point where they can say, "Thanks be to God, to-day by His help I have not sinned."

It is all a matter of your heart. If it is full of the Lord there can be no room for Satan. As St. Augustine said long ago, "Love God, and do what you will"; for if you love God you will desire nothing except what will be in accordance with His good pleasure. Offer, then, your heart to Jesus. Give Him all your love. Make an act of complete abandonment to Him. Tell Him you will see none but

Jesus, and Jesus in all. Offer Him your whole will. Accept His Will. If there is nought but His Will in your life where can Satan find an entrance?

Last of all, answer His plea, "Son, give Me thine heart." Let His love be your only passion, and your passion full of His Love. So shall you be wholly His.

THE FIRST MIRACLE

Read St. John ii: 1-11.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

RECOLLECT yourself. Where are you? In the Presence of God. How different does not life now appear? All our ills and problems vanish at the thought of the Divine Presence. Then lift your heart to the Saviour. Make an act of love to Him, the Lover of your soul. "O Lord Jesus, who in every place beholdest Thy chosen ones, give me such love to Thee that seeing myself before Thee I may do nothing unworthy of Thy Presence. O Jesus, I love Thee now and forevermore." Say the *Our Father*, the *Veni Creator*, and the *Hail Mary*.

I.

Picture the scene to yourself. There is the village. The houses are built on the slope of a hill and rise one above another. Go, in imagination, through the narrow, winding streets, to the house of the bridegroom. Pass in through the galleried court to the spacious banqueting room. See how it is decorated; it blazes with the light of many lamps. The

guests are reclining round the table on couches with soft cushions and many-colored tapestries. The bridal blessing has been pronounced, the bridal cup emptied. At the table are Mary, the disciples, and, in the midst of them, Jesus.

Fix your attention on the Saviour. To many He is a stranger, unknown, unloved. But do you make an act of joy for His Presence, for you know and love Him. "O Lord Jesus, may my last breath be a breathing of love. Let the last act of my life be an act of love."

II.

This feast is no ordinary one for our Lord. It marks a new period in His work. He has taken leave of His hidden life at Nazareth. He has taken His first public step at His Baptism. He has gone into the desert to wrestle with Satan. And now He mingles with men once more, but this time as their Saviour. He begins at Cana His larger ministry to His people. From now on, all is to be consecrated to His public ministry.

It is much the same with the world to-day. The world is entering upon a new period. What kind of an age is it to be? An age of new cruelties, undreamed-of selfishness, un-

believable crime? Or a time of fresh consecration, unmatched self-sacrifice, real and vital devotion?

What judgment will history pronounce a hundred years hence? You are to assist in its making. It must mean to you a cutting off from past sin in your life, a rebirth, an awakening to God's Love. Make an act of sorrow for your past. Think definitely of one sin. Tell Jesus once more that you are sorry for it. Say the Act of Contrition: "My God, I am sorry that I have offended Thee Who art so good. Forgive me for Jesus' sake, and I will try to sin no more."

III.

Look once more into the banquet hall. There is an awkward pause in the festivities. The wine is failing. Our Lady whispers in the ears of the servants near her, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." They look expectantly to Jesus. But what a strange direction He gives. "Fill the waterpots with water." Do they hesitate? Not for an instant. They have been fired by Mary's confidence and in the ardor of their zeal they fill them "up to the brim."

How do you act when Jesus speaks to you? Ofttimes He asks strange things of you. Do

you obey promptly and to the utmost of your power, no matter how unexpected the command? Resolve that His next request will be complied with immediately and fervently. "I dedicate all my will to Thee, O Lord; may Thy will be done in time and in eternity."

IV.

"There were set there six waterpots." Each of them probably contained about twenty gallons. A hundred and twenty gallons of wine! One waterpot alone would have been more than enough. But Jesus did not inquire how little was needed. He consulted none but His own Heart. And the Sacred Heart of Jesus is prodigal in its love. He wants to give lavishly, without measure. He will give you much more strength than is necessary to overcome that temptation, a hundred-fold more than is needed to correct that dominant fault. He longs to lavish it all on you.

Then tell Him of your need, open to Him your trouble. He knows all about it already but He wants you to come to Him and unburden your soul. He *will* help, He *will* strengthen, He *will* bless, with both hands, and more abundantly than your fondest dream has pictured.

V.

Jesus is always prodigal with love. But you must respond in the same spirit. You, too, must give your all. It can be done. Recall Mary Magdalene's gift. (Read St. Matthew xxvi: 6-13.) See her bountifulness. She never stopped to consider *how little*. She only asked *how much*. You must come to Jesus in the same way. You must give your all.

This means that the precious box of self-will must be broken before you can pour out the ointment of your love. How hard it is to break it! Too long have you treasured it! Too long have you clung to your own desires, your self-will. You must bravely destroy this alabaster casket. If you persist in admiring it, soon the ointment of love within will dry up. Shatter it! This means you must accept God's will. That cross which you resented, which you thought so unfair, so unnecessary, you must accept. The will of God be done. Thus will the precious ointment of love be poured forth and Jesus and His love will fill your life to the brim.

"Jesu's arm beneath thy head,
Jesu's love around thee shed,

Jesu's light to cheer thy way,
Jesu's ear to hear thee pray.
Jesu's loving hand to bless,
In this weary wilderness,
Trusting His dear hand to guide
He will keep thee near His side."

VI.

But you must do more than break the box of self-will. You must pour out the ointment of your love freely and without stint. Your Lord poured out His love prodigally and superabundantly. He never spared Himself. "Having loved His own He loved them to the uttermost." His Mother gave her all: "Be it unto me according to Thy word."

Mary Magdalene caught that spirit. You must do the same. You may not have much to give. Neither did the widow who cast two mites into the treasury. If she had stopped to consider the untold wealth of the temple she might have thought that her tiny offering would not count. Again, it was not *how little* but *how much.* Do you do the same? This means that the next time some one irritates you, you must do more than make a little act of love to that person, an act just big enough to keep you out of sin, but you must pour out your love generously. It means that the next

time you are asked to do something you do not want to do, you will give your time gladly. It means that you must not only take up your cross, but you must rejoice in it. It means that you must expect to renew your sacrifice of self daily. Will you do this for the love of the Saviour? Then say to Him:

"To Thee, my Jesus, I offer all the holy thoughts and resolutions which Thou hast deigned to grant me. Thine they are and now I place them in Thy pierced hands, so that there they may be kept safe. And with them I offer myself freely and entirely to accomplish what I have resolved to do."

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

Read St. John iii: 1-17.

✝ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

THINK of God's Presence. "O heavenly King, Who so dwellest in Thy kingdom that Thou art present in every part of it, grant that I may live always in Thy presence and serve Thee with all my heart, with all my mind and with all my strength." Think of His presence in your heart. Lift up your heart to Him: "O my God, who being within me, art more present to me than I am to myself, make perfect, I beseech Thee, this fellowship with Thee and do Thou work in me so perfect a union of grace and charity that I may be made one spirit with Thee forever." Make an act of abandonment to the will of God, saying the *Our Father.* Ask for our Lady's intercessions. Say the *Hail Mary.* Entreat the Holy Spirit to take the things of Jesus and show them unto you. Say the *Veni Creator.*

I.

Picture the scene. It is in Jerusalem. On the roof of the house is the "aliyah," the guest chamber. It is a gusty night, and a single oil

lamp flickers up and down with the spring wind, casting its yellow gleam on the Divine Guest.

It was a time well chosen for Nicodemus to pay his secret visit. At night the streets would be empty. No one would see him as he ascended the outside steps which led to the guest chamber. See the white-haired rabbi approaching the strong, young Saviour. His errand is soon told; one sentence implies his surrender and the purpose of his errand. "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God."

"We know." How did Nicodemus know? Surely not from the study of the Rabbinical writings, or from his discussions with the doctors of the law. It was the Holy Spirit who had put the faith into his heart and had convinced him with certain knowledge, a knowledge which had brought him to Jesus. It is God's Spirit alone that can convince. It matters not how many books you have read, how deep has been your study of philosophy or of science, or how much you know *about* God. The question is, "Do you know *God?*" Do you know Him as your Father, your Friend, your Brother, your Lover? Only God can teach you to know Himself. The more you know,

the more you will be drawn to Jesus. Make an act of surrender to Him. Tell Him that you want to know Him more fully, more intimately.

Again, have you a friend whom you wish to convert? How are you going about it? Are you arguing? You will never convert anyone by arguing. Are you sending your friend literature, books, papers, tracts? Those are better than your own contentious reasoning.

But there is a surer way. It is the way of prayer. How much time do you spend before the Blessed Sacrament with your friend's name on your lips? How much of surrender in your own life have you to offer as an intercession? Have you prayed, fasted, offered your will to God?

II.

Our Lord takes Nicodemus straight to the heart of things. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It meant a new beginning, a clean sweep, and a whole-hearted acceptance of Jesus.

It was all strange and unintelligible to Nicodemus. A "new birth." That could mean many things to the Jewish mind. But Nicodemus does not pause to pick and choose, to

weigh and balance, to make fine distinctions. He accepts all. This is what you must do in regard to the Catholic Religion. You cannot pick and choose, as many do. They take what pleases them, accepting the æsthetic, and refusing the ascetic.

Conversion means the giving up of your own opinions, as well as your own will. In what have you been holding back from a full submission to the truth? Face it, and make a whole-hearted surrender to Jesus.

"I am Thy servant, O Lord. Give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments."

Conversion to Jesus. For most of us this means confession of sin. This is the test of whether you are turning to Jesus, whether you are seeking to become like the lowly, humble Saviour. You say: "I confess my sins to God every night." Do you? Do you ever get below the surface-sins? You confess uncharitable thoughts. But what lies behind those unloving thoughts? A will not really dedicated to God. Make a resolution to be more thorough in your contrition. You will never learn of Jesus until you have attained to a real sorrow for sin.

"O Blessed Jesu, direct my steps to Thee.

Help me to surrender all to Thee. And do Thou give Thyself to me. So shall I be glad all the days of my life, for I shall have learned perfectly to do Thy will."

III.

Think, too, that conversion is a life-long process. All your life long you must persevere. You must be steadily turning your eyes away from the things of the world, and faithfully seeking Jesus. He alone must be your goal. Holiness comes by no magical transformation. It is an achievement. Will you persevere in seeking Him, as did Nicodemus? Will you be a true pilgrim, humble, valorous, courageous, persevering, seeking day by day a deeper conversion to Jesus? Tell Him you will come to Him, not only secretly, by night, but openly, by day; that you will labor and work hard at your conversion.

Conversion to Jesus! Turning ever to Him! He is always there, waiting for you, His dear Face turned toward you. He is always waiting for you, always! You may hear His voice saying: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

AT THE WELL OF SYCHAR

Read St. John iv: 4-30.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

LIFT up your heart to the Lord Jesus. Try to realize how very dear you are to Him. Give your love in return. Say the *Veni Creator*, the *Our Father*, and the *Hail Mary*.

I.

Picture the scene. Think of it as on the evening of a day in summer. The fields are "already white to the harvest." Our Lord and His disciples have entered the fair plain of Samaria and have advanced as far as the well of Jacob. Here Jesus waits while the others go on into Sychar. See our Lord weary, covered with dust, and thirsty, sitting on the low curb of the well.

As He rests there, a woman, a Samaritan, with whom the Jews have no dealing, comes out to the well, her water pitcher on her shoulder. As soon as the woman's eyes rest on our Lord's garments with their white fringes (those of the Samaritans were blue) she recognizes Him as a Jew. She shrinks from expected insult. Imagine her surprise when Jesus says, "Give Me to drink."

Have you ever had a similar experience? You met Him unexpectedly. He sought you. Guilty, perhaps, with sin, you shrank from Him, from expected rebuke. But it was a word of love, of longing for you which met you. Why are you surprised? Do you ever expect to fathom the love and desire and craving of Jesus for you?

II.

"Give Me to drink." It was not only His Body which thirsted, but His Heart. His Sacred Heart craved the love of this soul. Consider how our Lord always says to every soul willing to receive Him: "Come unto Me." Sometimes He speaks to the weary, the discouraged, the sinful. To them it means: "Come unto Me and I will refresh *you*." Again He speaks to those who are glad of heart. To them it means: "Come unto Me, and I will increase your joy a thousand-fold." Again, He may come to men and say the same words. But this time they mean: "Come unto Me, for *I* am weary. The cross which I have borne is very heavy. Give Me drink of your love; refresh Me by the gift of your heart."

How Jesus craves the love of men! How His Human Heart desires the human love of

His people! His whole life was a wooing of their souls. At the beginning of His ministry He said: "Give Me to drink." At its close He cries, "I thirst." Was there ever a love like His? It is the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He says to you: "Give Me to drink." His Sacred Heart longs for the love of your heart. Give Him your love. Make a simple but fervent act of love. So shall you give Him to drink. "O Jesus, I love Thee, and I want to love Thee more."

III.

How Jesus craved love all His life long! Because of His desire for your love He was born at Christmas. In all the pages of the Gospel story you will find His craving for love. Think of the call of St. Nathanael (St. John i: 48). He says to our Lord: "Whence knowest Thou me?" Jesus answers: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

Jesus saw the man and craved the love of his heart. Jesus sees you, too, though you may think you are hid from Him. He sees you, and desires your love. You are not compelled to give this act of love to Him. No one will know whether you make it or not. But He will miss it. Make the act of love.

"Draw my heart unto Thee and bind it to Thee by the bonds of Thy love, that I may never be separated from Thee, O Sacred Heart of Jesus. Show me Thy beauty, ravish me with Thy sweetness, and accept the poor offering of my heart's love, O Sacred Heart of Jesus."

IV.

Turn to the close of our Lord's life and meditate on His weeping over Jerusalem (St. Matthew xxiii: 37). You will see the same craving for love. Before Him lay the city of David, the city of God, His city. How he longed for the love of every one of these people, and they would not give it to Him. Behold Him with the tears on His cheeks: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" How often would Jesus have taken you to His Heart, and you would not. Give yourself to His love now.

"Jesus, whose Heart craves the love of my heart,
I love Thee.
Jesus, whose Heart is an altar of love, I love Thee.
Jesus, whose Heart is rejected of men, I love Thee.
Jesus, whose Heart is inflamed with love, I love
Thee."

V.

Our Lord covets the love of all souls. He cannot bear to lose one. Think how He tried to win the soul of Judas. He sought to win his love by trusting him. Judas fell little by little, but Jesus reached out His love to save him.

In the days of His Passion Jesus made a supreme effort to win His disloyal follower. He gave him a place of honor at the Last Supper, He washed his feet, He gave him the morsel of bread, the "sop," a mark of respect and distinction to an honored guest. Jesus even gave him, as some think, the Blessed Sacrament.

He used every means he could devise to win this soul. He could not bear to lose it. Jesus says: "What thou doest, do quickly." as if, seeing that Judas was bent on betraying Him, He hoped that if it were quickly done, there would yet be time for repentance.

At their meeting in the Garden, Jesus salutes him as "friend," still claiming him that He might win him back. But Judas would not respond. Meditate on the grief of the loving Heart of Jesus! St. John the Apostle of Love, the "Secretary of the Sacred Heart," records our Lord's words before Pilate (St. John xix:

10-11): "Thou couldst have no power at all against Me, unless it were given thee from above: *therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin.*" He could think, not of Himself, but only of that soul that had refused His love.

Do not think that you are safe. The story of Judas is not only the history of a great love, and therefore an encouragement to you, but it is also the warning of the peril of your refusing the love of Jesus.

Judas fell little by little. You would not openly betray the Master, but what are your little sins? And beside you is Jesus, offering you the sop of regard, washing your feet, giving you His Body and Blood, calling you friend. If Judas had only come back and thrown himself at Jesus' feet, he would have received free forgiveness; and more than that, he would have gladdened the Heart of Jesus. If you come to Him and give Him your love, you will receive pardon, you will rejoice the Sacred Heart.

V.

Think now of a soul which did respond to our Lord's love. Consider how Jesus won St. Peter's heart (St. John xxi: 15-17). Try to

comprehend the love which was in Christ's Heart, as in the gray of the morning He said: "Simon, lovest thou Me?" St. Peter answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Our Lord asked the question again the third time: "Simon, *lovest* thou Me?" And Peter cried from his heart: "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

So it is with you! See how much He has loved you! He came into the world, into your life, to claim you for Himself. For love of you He agonized in the Garden, for love of you He was betrayed, for love of you He was mocked and spit upon, for love of you He toiled up the long way of the cross, for love of you he was lifted up upon the cross.

Behold how He loves you! See how He has sought you, shared your life, toiled with you, suffered with you. What return have you made? Have you been indifferent to His love? Perhaps you thought He did not want your heart. But see, He craved the love of the sinful Samaritan woman, of the sinful Magdalene, of sinful Jerusalem, of faithless Judas, of sinful Peter. Be assured that He will not give you up. He will never cease to love you.

So give yourself to that love, the wonderful love of the human Heart of Jesus, the Heart pierced with love for you. Fling aside that sin, and fall at His feet. Make more fervent acts of love, more heartfelt prayers, more frequent and loving Communions. So will you be doing your part, so will you be giving yourself to Him. "Take my heart, for I cannot give it Thee, and when Thou hast it, keep it, for I cannot keep it for Thee."

THE PARABLES OF THE LOST

Read St. Luke xv: 1-10.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

LIFT up your heart to God in an act of adoration. "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High, Amen." Make an act of abandonment to God, putting yourself and all your life into His keeping. "O Saviour of the world, Who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood hast redeemed us; save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord." Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your meditation. He has somewhat to say to you, if you will but hearken. Say the *Veni Creator*, the *Our Father*, and the *Hail Mary*. Offer your meditation to your Lord.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."

I.

Consider the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. These two parables, together with that of the Prodigal Son, have always deeply touched men's hearts. Beneath them

lies a very common human experience, the loss of something, the desire to recover it, the feeling that with that recovery all else dwindles in importance. Have you this sense of loss in your life, this need for something, for somebody, you know not what or whom? Then ask God to interpret to you the parables according to your loss and need.

"O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee, mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

II.

Picture the scene. The shepherd has spent the day with his sheep on the mountainside. He has watched though the noontide heat, and now the evening chill tells him that he must bring his flock home. He calls his dog. The sheep are rounded up. Automatically (he has done it a thousand times before) he counts the sheep. Why, what is this? Has he made a mistake? He counts again. There is no false count. One of the sheep is missing. Now he is all attention, active, alert. He leaves the ninety and nine and turns his face to the wilderness to seek the lost one of the flock.

Think of the value this rustic places on just *one* sheep. If a score had been lost his anxiety would have been justified, but it is just one out of a hundred and that a sickly one perhaps, the poorest of the flock. In the other parable, think of the value placed on one coin. The housewife had nine more coins in her purse. Why, then, all this bustle and dust because of one coin?

Is it worth it? And perhaps it is only one soul that has wandered. But on account of this one sinner is employed a wealth of love, and his home-coming thrills heaven more than that of ninety and nine just persons who have never gone astray.

Is it right? You know it is, for it is *your* soul that has wandered, it is for *you* that the Shepherd leaves the others and goes into the wilds. He wants to save *you,* He wants *your* love, He craves *your* service. It is worth all His Passion to Him to redeem *you.*

Such is the meaning of the parables. Jesus does not save souls in ranks or in companies or in battalions. He saves them *one by one.* For one He was born into the wilderness of this world, for one He shed His Blood, for one He arose triumphant from the grave. You are that one. Jesus wants you and your love.

Make an act of love to Him. "O Jesus, I love Thee and I want to love Thee more."

Jesus my Shepherd is,
'Twas He that loved my soul;
'Twas He that washed me in His Blood,
'Twas He that made me whole;
'Twas He that sought the lost,
That found the wandering sheep,
'Twas He that brought me to the fold,
'Tis He that still doth keep.*

*Horatio Bonar.

III.

Why had the sheep wandered? It was simply from the innate tendency of sheep to go astray. There could have been nothing deliberate about it. One can hardly imagine, even for the purposes of a spiritual lesson, that the sheep said: "I am going to forsake the shepherd once and for all. I shall never see him again. I shall never take my place among his other sheep. I prefer to go into the wilderness alone." No, the sheep did nothing intentionally wrong. She wandered because she was silly and prone to wander.

So it is with the souls of men. Often they do not wander wilfully. Is this your case? You have sinned. It was not done wilfully or with a full knowledge of what you were

doing. It is not mortal sin. You have not been separated from your God. But see how quick He is to seek you, how great is His love for you. Call to Him, that He come to you the faster.

"O come to my heart, Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for Thee."

In the second parable, it was carelessness which lost the coin. Here again was no deliberate intent. Does spiritual sloth beset you? Do you know what you ought to do, but fail to make the effort to do it? Have you grown careless about your rule. If you have grown lax, resolve to start anew. Say the *Our Father.*

IV.

In the first parable the sheep was lost in the wilderness. In the second, the coin disappeared in a house. One was far away from human habitation, the other at home. It is not only those outside the Church who may be lost. Do not think that just being a Christian in outward observance will save you. The Catholic Faith is not magic, though it accomplishes wonderful results. Perhaps more souls will be saved in some parts of heathendom, if they respond to the light God sends them, than in some parts of God's Church. To

you has been given greater light and therefore greater will be your responsibility. Are you making use of all your privileges? Or is the spirit of neglect marring your Communions, your Confessions, your prayers? Neglect and slackness will increase your tendency to wander from the fold of Christ.

V.

Lastly, think of the joy you will give to the Shepherd by your renewed service. It is not so much *your* happiness that is important (though the practice of the Catholic Religion almost always does bring joy) but rather the thrill of delight in heaven, among the saints and angels and in the Sacred Heart of Jesus whenever a wanderer comes home. Have you ever so thrilled God's Heart? Have you sent a smile across His Face? Have you made your first confession? Of course it is hard, but think of the "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Read St. Mark v: 21-43.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

TRY to realize God's Presence. You do not feel it, but you know that He is here. Put out of mind any distracting thoughts as often as they recur. Do not be disturbed when you find your mind has wandered. Recall it gently to the meditation without stopping to make critical reflections upon its errant tendencies. Dwell longest on what arouses in you the most devotion, and try to give more time to the exercise of the will in the acts, than to consideration of the understanding. Say the *Our Father*, the *Veni Creator*, and the *Hail Mary*. Make an act of trust in God's will for you, especially in regard to this meditation. Tell Him you will welcome a dry meditation if such be his choice for you. Say: "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

I.

Picture Jesus sitting in the boat on that spring day, as they approach the shore and the keel grates on the sands. Watch the disciples, ankle-deep in the water, steadying it

as Jesus steps ashore. As He starts up the beach, Jairus breaks from the throng and flings himself at the feet of the Master. Hear his words: "My little daughter lieth at the point of death . . . I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her . . . that she may be healed; and she shall live."

"And Jesus went with him." Jesus always hears your prayers, He cannot but hear them, for He gives you the desire to pray. He will always assist you if you ask Him. But you must ask, and more than that, you must trust Him. He will always come to your aid, though perhaps not when or as you wish. You see how He acted on this occasion. He had promised His help. But notice the interruption. The crowd increases as He goes into the town. Now it is so great that in the narrow street the Saviour is jostled to and fro by the throng. A poor sick woman comes to be healed. Could not she have come at some other time? But however inopportune she may be, Jesus will not turn her away. He must stop to hear her. He makes a delay.

Delay! Is it not one of the hardest things in the spiritual life to bear? You could stand any amount of labor; but to do nothing, to wait, and to wait patiently, is hard. Often

Christ wills that you should tarry and wait. He has waited so patiently, lo, these many years, for you; cannot you wait a few days for Him? He has not forgotten you, He will come, He will help. Even at this moment He is doing the very best thing for you. Wait patiently for Him, for He will surely come.

II.

Consider the faith that filled this woman's soul. "If I may but touch His clothes, I shall be whole." She did not openly claim His power, for she was, according to the Jewish law, unclean. See her timidly reaching out her finger to touch the hem of His robe. And she is rewarded according to her faith. At once she is made whole.

She touched Jesus! That is what we must do,—touch Jesus. From His Sacred Humanity flows all grace. We touch Him in prayer, in the daily cross, in outward nature, in the persons of our brethren. But especially we touch Jesus in Holy Communion, for in the Holy Communion is the Presence of Jesus. In this Sacrament, that is, *in Him*, is the source of all power and strength.

Receive Him, and you will be made whole. How often do you receive this power and life?

Once a month? Once a week? Why not daily? Do not excuse yourself by saying: "I am not worthy." Of course you are not worthy. No one is worthy. But you will not become more worthy by not receiving. Our Lord gives you Himself in this Holy Sacrament just because you are unworthy, because you need strength, and life, and love. He instituted It as the means of life, and not primarily that He should be honored. Resolve to make your Communions oftener, to come more frequently to touch Jesus, to receive your "daily Bread."

"Blessed, praised, and adored be our Lord Jesus Christ on His throne of glory in heaven and in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar."

III.

But see, someone presses through the crowd. "Thy daughter is dead," he says to Jairus, "why trouble the Master?" But Jesus will receive no such message. He wants to meet the needs of all. He wants to be "troubled." He turns to the ruler, saying, "Be not afraid, only believe." He says to him as he does to you: "Make your act of faith."

At last they reach the house. Jesus and the three disciples enter the chamber of death.

See Him in the midst of the hired mourners, going calmly to the couch where the little maid is lying. He takes her by the hand. "Daughter, arise." "And straightway the damsel arose and walked."

There are many lessons to be drawn from this miracle. Consider but one. Think of the new point of view of this little girl. She had, no doubt, heard of Jesus. But He had been vague, shadowy, far-off, unreal. Now He was near, and dear, and very real. Now she knew in fact that she owed every breath to Him. From now on her whole life must be His. It must be a real consecration to Jesus. Ask the little maid's prayers that you, too, may live anew to Jesus. "Holy daughter of Jairus, pray for me!"

IV.

In times of high aspiration it was easy for you to give yourself to Jesus. He seemed so near. It was so easy to do His will. Then came, as they come to all men, the darker days, the days of testing, of trial. God seemed to have forgotten you. But He was trying to teach you the lesson that you must serve Him for His own sake and not for your own. In your times of darkness and sorrow God is not loving you less but more. He is trusting you.

When the times of failure come, welcome them as blessed moments when you can learn that it is not you, but God who is to do great things. When the hours of disappointment come, see in them opportunities to yield to God's will. When life is a grievous tangle, when you see nothing but blackness ahead, then hasten to make an act of loyal devotion to Jesus. It makes but little difference how you *feel.* What is your *will?*

Do you want to serve God? Perhaps, like the little maid in the Gospels, you have gone down into the shadow. When Jesus calls you back, let your will rise up strong and full of love for Him. Give yourself to Him anew.

"I come back to Thee, my God. Be Thou henceforth the only and entire object of my thoughts. Take me and make me wholly Thine."

Think of the need of consecration of your ordinary duties. Since you first began to serve God your duties have become sterner, your labors more exhausting, your temptations keener and more subtle. This demands that more attention be paid to your spiritual life, to your daily prayers, to your examens, to your preparation and thanksgiving at Communion. Offer the routine of your day to

Jesus. See Jesus in your fellowmen. Take up your cross daily. Rejoice in God's will for you. Consider all these familiar duties and consecrate your life afresh to God. In the days of your youthful fervor you made your vows to God; the baptismal vow, the confirmation vow, the marriage vow, perhaps, or the priestly vow. Kneel down and renew these promises to God.

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee."

THE LOAVES AND FISHES

Read St. Matthew xiv: 13-34.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

TURN your thoughts and your whole will to God. Your meditation may not be measured in value by the pleasure experienced in it; rather is the reverse true. A dry meditation requires many acts of the will, and consequently closer union with Jesus. Unite yourself to the will of God in the saying of the *Our Father.* Ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Repeat the *Veni Creator.* Unite yourself to the Mother of God. Repeat the ***Hail Mary.***

I.

To-day our Lord calls His disciples (and you among the number) to go with Him into "a desert place apart." They are tired out, and need refreshment. So He takes them apart, to rest their weary bodies and to feed their hungry souls. See them shoving the boat off from the shore. How still and blue the lake is! The water drips from the oars, as, forgetting to row, they lean forward to catch our Lord's least word. They are happy now, completely absorbed in Jesus. Looking long-

ingly into His face, they drink in every word, learning Him, loving Him more and more.

When you are tired by your day's work, when you are discouraged, disheartened by failure, when your cross grows very heavy, turn to Jesus. Go apart with Him but for a few moments. Look into His face. Listen to His voice. He alone can help you. He alone will never fail you. Picture Him sitting near you, full of compassion for you, with arms outstretched, with words of comfort ready to fall from His lips, waiting so patiently for you to come. Look to Him now. Tell Him of your trouble. He understands. He will give consolation, encouragement, and love.

II.

What a joy to be with Jesus! Think first of the disciples spending the day with Him. The little boat is now nearing the end of its voyage. The disciples row into a little creek, and, making the boat fast, they follow Jesus up the hillside, where the shade of the green forest affords relief from the heat. See them sitting in a circle round the Master. The broken rays of sunlight fall through the canopy of trees as they sway in the breeze and light up the Master's face. But to the eyes of

the Twelve He is illumined by a supernatural light, the light of love. How their love grows! Just to be with Jesus is enough! As they sit there, great floods of love pour forth from His Heart into theirs, purifying them from all the dross of selfishness and self-will and, returning to His Heart, bring their hearts to Him, uniting them closer than ever before.

So it may be with you. As you watch Him, as you murmur His Name, His face shines with a divine glory. You watch and know, aye, can almost feel, the attractive power of His Sacred Heart. You know (even though you do not feel it) that He is pouring the great stream of His love into your heart. The tide of His love is surging through you, cleansing you, purifying you, strengthening you, and as it returns to Him brings you to Him. Make an act of union with Jesus.

"O my Jesus, I embrace Thee with the arms of my soul. Would that I might possess Thee alone. I love Thee above Heaven and earth and all that is therein contained. In Thy Heart do I place my heart and my will and my whole life. Permit me to rest upon Thy Sacred Bosom that my heart may be filled with Thee and Thy love. O my Life, grant me to be joined to Thee forevermore."

III.

So part of the day passes. Our Lord has comforted the Twelve. But there is other work to do. He rises and descends again towards the sea. What a change! The countryside, so deserted when they arrived, is now bright with color, the vivid hues of the garments of men and women and children. They know Jesus must be somewhere near, and they are looking for Him. And as the Master, the Shepherd of souls, looks down upon them, all scattered and weary with their search, His great Heart is moved with compassion. They are "as sheep not having a shepherd."

Jesus turns to the disciples. "Let us go down to them," He says. The disciples look at one another in dismay. They had thought to have Jesus all to themselves. Now these stupid people have spoiled it all! Why could they not have come some other time? But a look from the Master satisfies them. They yield their wills to His. They are happy in their sacrifice. They joyfully give their Lord to their brethren.

When you found at last, after a hard day, a quiet half-hour by yourself, and just as you were settled the door-bell rang, a call for help came, someone asked advice, have you always

given your time graciously? Or perhaps you had a sweet Communion. Did you spoil it all when you got home by being impatient, or even losing your temper? Resolve to sacrifice your time and give yourself more lovingly. Accept His will for you in the very least matters. Say the *Our Father*, repeating "Thy will be done," three times.

IV.

See, now, our Lord going among the multitudes, laying His hands on them, comforting them, healing them. Hear those who were dumb shout His praises. The erstwhile lame run to tell others, and the eyes that were blind gaze with joy upon His face. Watch them pressing upon Him, kissing His hands, His feet, His robe. He has cured them. He has taken away their afflictions. He has filled them with joy.

They scarcely know what they do, nor do they care. Joy, inebriating, rapturous, fills their hearts. The tears rain down, but they are tears of happiness. No one is forgotten. No one is left unblessed. That timid man over there, crouching behind a rock, who fears to come because of his loathsome sores, our Lord knows he is there. He goes to him,

touches his body, and lo, the flesh becomes once more "like unto the flesh of a little child." That woman who holds back, who needs just a look, Jesus flashes it to her, and she falls at His feet. "Come unto Me," He cries to all, and all are helped. Now He, too, is radiant, for all are happy.

Is their happiness yours? It may be, if you desire it. Perhaps you have a sickness, an internal loathsome disease. It is called sin. Perhaps you have kept away from your confession for years. Jesus is looking at you, holding out His arms, smiling. You can resist no longer. You will make your confession now, like these, and then you too will be full of joy.

"Blessed is the man whose unrighteousness is forgiven; and whose sin is covered." "Be glad, O ye righteous and rejoice in the Lord: and be joyful, all ye that are true of heart."

V.

So the day passes and the evening comes on. Soon the long eastern day will close. It is "a desert place apart." "Give ye them to eat," says the Saviour, and the disciples answer: "We have here but five loaves and two fishes." What are they to do? Our Lord

tells them to make the people sit down. What joy is not our Lord's now! Their need has touched His Sacred Heart. Pity stirs power. He blesses the few bits of food and the disciples distribute them.

Why, what is happening? See the amazement of the crowd, hear their cries of surprise, watch them stretching out eager hands for the miraculously multiplied food. Note how our Lord smiles as He watches them. He is thinking of another miracle, of another Feast. His Heart is joying over another hunger, which only another Banquet will satisfy. Here is but barley bread; there His own Body will feed them. Here but five thousand are filled, at that Banquet many thousand times five thousand will be nourished. This food evokes cries of praise; but what endless praises, hymns, ecstacies will the other Food not inspire!

"O Sacred Banquet wherein Christ is received, the memory of His Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given unto us, Alleluia."

VI.

When they have all eaten, our Lord sends them home, back to the same tasks, the ordi-

nary round of the day, the old work. But how different these labors are now! For they have been with Jesus, they have received His blessing, they are aglow with His love.

Your work, too, which is so tedious, that care which demands so much of you, that business so confining, may be inspired of Jesus. In Holy Communion, you will meet Him, touch Him, be filled with Him, His power, His strength, His energy, His love, His all.

THE WALKING ON THE SEA

Read St. Matthew xiv: 22-33 and St. John vi: 15-21.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

BE QUIET in body and soul, for this is of great value in gaining repose and in establishing interior peace. Then by an act of the will place yourself in the Presence of God. You must expect to renew this act often during your meditation. Say the *Our Father*, the *Veni Creator*, and the *Hail Mary*. Offer your meditation to our Lord.

"O Lord Jesus, in union with that divine intention wherewith while upon earth Thou didst offer Thy praises to the Father, I now offer this meditation to Thee."

I.

The five thousand have just been fed and Jesus has bidden the disciples to go over to the other side of the lake while He sends the multitudes away.

Now He goes up into the mountain to pray. Night comes down and still He kneels in prayer. Now the moon rising over the mountain throws long shadows down the steep slopes. But out on the lake whither He had sent the disciples, a great wind is blowing.

Sudden gusts rock the little boat. The flying scud hides the light of the moon. The waves dash angrily against the boat, mounting higher and higher each moment.

Fear begins to invade the little company of the disciples. "Where is the Master?" they cry. And yet He was never nearer to them, as He watched them from His mountain height. Try to remember this when you feel your trust in Him wavering. Do not scruple to call to Him. He, too, cried, when the Father seemed to withdraw His Presence, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Make an act of trust in Him. "In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust; let me never be confounded."

II.

Look now at the disciples out there on the lake. Jesus has sent them out on the treacherous waters away from land, away from Him. Jesus may so deal with you some day. Perhaps He has already asked it of you. Years ago perhaps He seemed very near. And then He gave you an unexpected call. To follow the new vocation will seem like going away from Him. Previously you were sure of your way. Now nothing is clear. Perhaps too, like the disciples you seem to make no progress. They had been toiling until the morn-

ing watch (some time between three and six o'clock) and were only halfway over. Is it that you do not seem to get anywhere in your new vocation, in your meditations, in your confessions? Do you feel that they are a waste of time? But only persevere. Jesus is coming. "O God, make speed to save me: O Lord, make haste to help me."

IV.

Now the storm is breaking over the lake. The clouds have blotted out the stars, the wind roars over the billows, ripping them into clouds of foam and spray. A dreary night after a weary day. Where is the promised rest? The disciples fall to baling out the boat. But the waves surge over the gunwale. They begin to despair.

But what is that Form out there? It moves over the ridges of the waters, now lost in the trough of the waves, now rising dim and specter-like against the sky. And though they had longed for Jesus, they did not recognize Him. "It is a spirit," they whisper hoarsely. But it is no spirit, but Jesus crying, "Be of good cheer."

Is your day weary? Do your nights seem endless? Do you long for Jesus? Are you losing hope? Look about you! Jesus is near

you! Perhaps you do not recognize Him. Does your cross appear ghastly? Look at it again. On it hangs no spectre, but the Blessed Jesus suffering for you. Do men seem hateful? Look again, study them, and you will find in them the Lord Christ.

Is life hopeless, do the storms of temptation rage? Look and you will see Jesus coming to you on those very waves, for you know that temptation brings Christ to you, if you but look for Him. Pray for spiritual insight, for a right judgment.

"O God Who didst teach the hearts of Thy faithful people by sending to them the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort."

V.

Peter is the first to act. This seems very natural, for he was of an impulsive temperament. But it is just this very temperament which is leading him into trouble. Often people have to be saved, not only from their sins, but also from their temperament.

Perils come to you, not only through what is bad in you, but also through what is good, through what is charming and attractive to others, through what is self-forgetful and even

self-sacrificing on your part. You need to be saved, not only from sin, but from yourself. Your very talents may wreck you. Think what talents God has given you and put them all in His keeping. Again, be glad if you have fewer talents than others. You may thereby escape temptation to pride. You may be safer. Ask God to help you lead a lowly life.

VI.

Think how St. Peter began to fail in the venture which our Lord permitted him to make. He was not disobeying when he stepped out on the billows. He was only going where he had been encouraged to go. "Bid me come unto Thee on the water." And Jesus said, "Come." Perhaps it may be that you are following the vocation which Jesus has appointed for you. Perhaps it has cost you many a sacrifice to begin to follow that vocation. But do not think that you are thereby saved. You may yet sink in the life or work to which God calls you. Vocation is not magic. Just to follow it outwardly will not save you. Vocation does not work automatically. It requires the constant co-operation of your will. Many a priest has been lost because he trusted to his calling to save him. Say to Jesus, "Lord, save me or I perish."

VII.

Consider too, that St. Peter began to sink the instant he began to fear. At first he walked manfully upon the sea. But on a sudden a huge billow surges towards him. The wind and the sea are boisterous. He looks away from Jesus. He is afraid, he begins to sink. There is nothing to tell us in Holy Scripture that the sea became more boisterous after he left the boat. As long as he looked at Jesus, "the sea was as pavement to him." But the moment he looked away he was afraid.

So it may be with you. As long as you keep Jesus clearly before your eyes, plainly in your life, you are safe. As long as your heart and will and life are given to Him, life can have no terrors for you. Have you given all to Jesus? Give it to Jesus lest it draw your gaze from Him. Say: "Jesus only, Jesus always, all for Jesus."

VIII.

Lastly, remember one thing. When Peter began to sink, Jesus was not far away. The instant He heard Peter's cry, He was at his side, holding him in His arms, steadying him on the waves, strengthening his heart. When you begin to sink, remember that Jesus is near. You have but to call to Him, and you will

find yourself in His arms. He will never fail you! Often you will need Him. The only question is, Will your pride keep you from calling to Him? Resolve that you will always turn to Jesus, no matter how often you fall.

"Fierce was the wild billow,
Dark was the night;
Oars labored heavily,
Foam glimmered white;
Trembled the mariners,
Peril was nigh:
Then said the God of God,
'Peace, it is I.'

"Ridge of the mountain-wave
Lower thy crest.
Wail of Euroclydon
Be thou at rest.
Sorrow can never be,
Darkness must fly,
Where saith the Light of Light,
'Peace, it is I.'

"Jesu, Deliverer,
Nigh to us be;
Soothe Thou my voyaging
Over life's sea:
Thou when the storm of death
Roars, sweeping by,
Whisper, O Truth of Truth,
'Peace, it is I.' "*

*St. Anatolius, translated by J. M. Neale.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Read St. Luke ix: 28-42.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

TURN your will to God. Remember that the best meditation is not that in which you find the most sensible consolation or the sweetest feelings or the greatest ease in prayer. Rather is it the one in which you are most submissive to the will of God, bearing all distractions and trials with a patient, loving spirit, without allowing yourself to be in the least discouraged. You seek but one thing, union with God. Make an act of desire for union with God in saying the *Our Father*. Ask the Holy Ghost to dwell in you in all the fulness of His Godhead. Say the *Veni Creator*. Think of Blessed Mary. No ecstacies were her glory, but rather her obedience and trust. "More blessed was she in her obedience than in her Child-bearing." You may have that blessing. Say the *Hail Mary*.

I.

Picture the scene. It was on a Sabbath evening that the Saviour led the three out along the road from Cæsarea Philippi to the

Mount of Transfiguration. See the mountain towering before you, illuminated by the sunset glow, first rose-colored, then deepening to purple darkness. Watch the Master and His three disciples climbing higher and higher, first through the vineyards on the lower slopes, then through the upper cornfields; higher still amid the oak forests that crown the summit. The soft darkness of the summer night steals on. Now the moon climbs aloft and floods the landscape with silver splendor, casting here and there long velvety shadows down the mountainside.

At the top Jesus kneels and prays. But lo, as He prays He is transfigured. The form of God shines through the form of the servant. His Face is brighter than the sun, His whole figure is bathed in light. The splendor of God is unveiled. Fall down in spirit and worship God revealed. You thought you knew His glory. St. John knew more of it than any soul. Yet when He saw Jesus in His unveiled Godhead he "fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. i: 17). Worship your God whose love surpasseth knowledge. Let His love transfigure you.

"O how beautiful art Thou, Jesu, my Beloved, how glorious in delights. I praise Thee,

I adore Thee, I love Thee, nay, words may not tell of my joy in Thee! At Thy feet will I fall and own Thee Lord and God."

II.

But whose are those two forms with the Master, awakening strange memories in the disciples? They are Moses and Elijah. These Old Testament Saints reveal themselves as companions of our Lord in His glory. They were saved in virtue of the coming Incarnation and Passion of Jesus Christ. This is called in theology the "retro-action of the Atonement." It means that all men are redeemed by our Lord, not only those who lived after His Passion, but those who finished their course before He came to earth. There is no salvation apart from the Blood of Jesus. Those who lived before the Incarnation were saved by the Blood of Jesus flooding backward to the first man Adam, as it also sweeps forward to the very last soul. See then this doctrine pictured before you: Jesus in the midst, on the one hand the three disciples, on the other the Saints of the Old Dispensation. This is what is meant by the Communion of Saints, that all are one family in Christ Jesus.

Do you believe in the Communion of

Saints? How do you show your belief? Do you love them, are you interested in them? Do you talk to them as familiar friends? Do you ask their prayers? And the Communion of Saints means that those who have passed before, mother and son and friend, are also very near. Do you ask their prayers? You did when they were living. But are they not living much more truly now, for their whole will and life is Christ's. They helped you in this life. They can help you far more, now that they see Jesus and know His will for you. Ask your holy dead to pray for you.

III.

Listen to the words from out of the glory. "They spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Their conversation was about His Passion. It is the Cross once more. Must the Cross be even here? Yes, there is no life without the Passion.

Would you, too, come to your Transfiguration? Then you must prepare yourself for the Cross. The price of glory is suffering. No Saint ever attained the raptures of the Mount of Transfiguration without the agony of suffering. Do you feel called to contemplation? "We must not tarry in lower forms of medita-

tion if we are called to rise up to a nearer approach to God in transports of Divine Love. Whatever such ascents may cost we are pledged to accept them as steps in the Ladder of the Cross whereon we mount to the Vision of God."

"Nor are we to think that a life of contemplation is one of calm retirement, freed from the necessity of spiritual conflict, from temptation and the persecution of the foe. There can be no clearer knowledge of God without greater purity of heart: there will be no purification without pain, no rapture without desolation, no Tabor without Calvary. . . . We must look up to the Cross. . . . We must rejoice in the Holy Cross as the glory of the Christian Name."*

IV.

But the glories of that night are not ended. Over them all spreads a cloud, a luminous cloud, filled with light and glory. In his confusion St. Peter stammers out: "Master, it is good for us to be here."

And now that awful cloud was spreading, wrapping them too in its folds. Heaven's glory was upon them. "And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my be-

*Quotations from the Rule of the Order of the Holy Cross.

loved Son; hear Him." They heard it and fell on their faces in worship. "This is my beloved Son; hear Him." Hear Him, hearken unto Jesus. He is calling *you* to-day. Calling you from your discontent, calling you from your sin, calling you to Him. Will you not come to Him? Will you not worship Him veiled in the Sacrament? Only come and hearken. Say, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

V.

Presently a touch aroused the three. It was the hand of Jesus. "Arise, be not afraid." And "Jesus was found alone." He was there to comfort them, to reassure them, to love them. They were on the Mount with Jesus only.

"On the Mount with Jesus only." That is where you are to abide, on the Mount with Jesus only. Your mount may be a crowded shop, a noisy office, a restless schoolroom, a quarrelsome parish, a grief-stricken home. Yet it is to be transfigured for you if Jesus is there. He is there, you have but to look about you and see Him. Look! Why, you can fairly see the cloud of glory, you can feel the strong touch of His Hand, you can hear His Voice, "It is I, be not afraid."

THE WASHING OF THE FEET

Read St. John xiii: 1-17.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

THINK of the Man of Sorrows. Lift up your heart to the Redeemer of all men. He is the Saviour of your soul. Then hasten to make an act of love to Him, saying His Holy Name, "Jesus, Saviour." Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in your meditation. Say the *Veni Creator*. Repeat, too, the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*.

I.

On couches about a table, which extended around three sides of the room, were reclining the disciples. At one end of the line was St. John. Next him lay our Lord, reclining on His left arm. On the other side of Jesus was Judas, then the other disciples. If you note this, you will see how St. John could lean on his Master's bosom and how Jesus could hand the sop to Judas first of all. At the table, the place of honor was at a person's left. Judas had taken his seat next to Jesus. You will also see how Judas could ask his question and not be overheard. Kneel in spirit in this room

and lift up your soul in an act of love to Jesus. "I love Thee, O my Jesus, for Thou art from everlasting. Make me, I beseech Thee, one with Thee as Thou art one with the Father."

II.

Now, supper being ended, Jesus rises from the table, lays aside His outer garments, and girds Himself with a towel. The disciples probably thought He was going to perform the ceremonial washing of the hands. But no, it is their feet He would wash. First He comes to Simon Peter. Hear his protest. "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" It is an utterance of reverence, yet of complete misunderstanding. So often Peter misunderstood his Lord. Hear our Lord's answer. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

How often have you misunderstood your Lord! So often you have thought Christ was doing unfitting things. Perhaps you accepted one miracle, but not all. "The coin in the fish's mouth," you may have said, "it seems so incongruous. The triumphal entry is so unlike the lowly Saviour." And then, as to His dealing with you in your own life, perhaps you said, "The cross He asks me to bear is so unsuited to me. Why should He give me

so heavy a cross and so light a one to others?" Ah, what if He should say to you, "Thou hast no part with Me." Yield to Him then, even as St. Peter yielded. You do not see the point now. You may never understand it in this world. But you must trust Jesus. Make an act of abandonment to Him.

"O Jesus, I abandon myself forever to Thine arms. Whether gentle or severe, lead me henceforth whither Thou wilt. I will not regard the way, but keep my eyes fixed upon Thee. I resolve, with Thy divine assistance, O my Saviour, to follow Thy desires without examining why Thou doest this rather than that, but I will follow Thee without seeking my own inclinations."

III.

"I have given you an example." It is an example of many things. Think especially of the humility of Jesus. He, the Creator, the Lord of all, very God, had washed the feet of sinful men. Praise God for the humility of His Son. "O praise God in His holiness; praise Him in the firmament of His power. Praise Him in His noble acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatness."

What is your humility? That is a very

hard question to answer. Humility is the gift of God. He alone bestows it. You cannot acquire humility by your own efforts. And you cannot safely estimate how much of it you have. Humility is a delicate virtue. It is like the butterfly's wings, only touch them and they are ruined. The moment you look to yourself for this virtue, and count it as your personal possession, it is gone. Nevertheless, there are some tests which you may apply. Consider these:

(1) Do you resent correction? When you have made a mistake and it is pointed out to you, are you hurt? Does your pride rebel? Then you lack humility.

(2) Are you troubled at failure? When you bring the same old things to confession time after time, are you worried and distressed, not because of the sin, but because you thought you were stronger, and you see you have failed? When your work does not seem to succeed, are you discouraged? Then, you lack humility. Or, perhaps you have not failed for a considerable time. You thought you were getting on well. And then God tested you with failure. Suddenly the trial came. Were you unprepared? Did you fall miserably? Were you ready to thank God for hav-

ing revealed your weakness? Or were you hurt, was your pride touched, were you angry? Then, you lack humility.

(3) Do you criticize others? The person who criticizes others often does so because he himself has the same fault. As long as you presume to criticize, you do not see your own weakness. You lack humility.

(4) Do you welcome humiliations, especially those which come at the hands of others? Do you say, "If he only knew how base I am, how much more would he not have said, and truthfully, of me!" If you are not rejoicing in will at your humiliations, you lack humility.

(5) Do you correct others? There are those who think they have a vocation to correct others. Are you constantly faulting others, telling them of their mistakes, trying to get them to do your will, making them unhappy? Then, you lack humility.

(6) Are you constantly speaking of yourself? Do the pronouns "I" and "my" appear often in your conversation? Or, in listening to others, do you quickly bring the conversation back to yourself? If you are guilty of any of these faults, you lack humility.

(7) Do you love to lead the hidden life? Do you push others forward? Do you think of others? Is your motto, "He must increase, I must decrease"? Then you are on the way to receive and use God's precious gift of humility.

"Then shall I begin to live, O Lord, not in mine own strength nor in the might of mine own arm, but relying only on the multitude of Thy mercies."

IV.

The solemn service is now over. Jesus reassumes His outer garments. He takes His place once more at the table. Now He breaks the silence. "The servant is not greater than his Lord."

"Truly hast Thou spoken, O blessed Jesus! Thou art my Lord and my Master. It was for love of me that Thou didst humble Thyself, to wash the feet of Thy disciples, to die the death of the cross. Thou art the Son of Man who didst come to minister, not to be ministered unto. All this Thou hast done for love of me. And what may I, Thy servant, do for love of Thee? I will yield myself to Thee. I will accept for Thy sweet sake every duty, place, or lot that shall fall to me. I will ask nothing

of Thee but Thyself. If it be pleasing to Thee, give me more and more of Thee. I beseech Thee to come to me so fully that nothing may remain in me save that which is wholly Thine. For Thee will I live, for Thee will I die. Into Thy hands, Lord, I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of truth."

V.

"I ask nothing of Thee but Thyself." That must be your continual prayer, to desire, not the things of Jesus, but Jesus; not Thine, but Thee. Pray, not for humility, not for unselfishness, not for courage, not for the cross, no, not for love; pray for Jesus, more of Jesus in your thoughts, more of Jesus in your words, more of Jesus in your will, more of Jesus in your heart.

Then, if you have Him, you will also have His humility, His unselfishness, His courage, yes and do not forget, you will also have His cross, now so precious, and, with His cross, His love.

"I ask nothing of Thee but Thyself. Not Thine but Thee, my Jesus and my all." Will you say this?

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Read St. Matthew xxvi: 26-28 and St. John vi: 41-58.

✝ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

THINK of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Lift up your heart to Him as He abides in the Tabernacle and make an act of worship to Him. "Blessed be Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar." Say the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and the *Veni Creator*.

"O God who in this wonderful Sacrament hast left unto us a memorial of Thy Passion, grant us so to reverence the Sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Blood that we may ever perceive in ourselves the fruit of Thy Redemption; who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen."

I.

"A memorial of Thy Passion." In pondering on some of the events of our Lord's life you are now fairly entered on the subject of His Cross and Passion. To-day you are to meditate on the memorial of this Passion, the Blessed Sacrament. You were purchased by the Precious Blood of Jesus (Col. i: 14). Think how this was accomplished. You have

thought about it many times before, but you cannot think of it too often. Your Redemption was secured for you by a whole life of obedience. The "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross" was its climax.

Your life, so full of disobedience, was paid for by a whole life of perfect obedience. Obedience put its seal on the beginning of His life, it was pressed hard into the ministry of Jesus, and it now finds its climax in the Passion and Death on Calvary. There, nailed to the wood of the cross, our Lord was lifted up to the Father, in loving submission to His will, and began to draw all men unto Himself. Hasten to make a great act of love to Jesus for His obedience even unto death.

"How great is Thy love for me, O most sweet Redeemer, for Thou didst for me lead a life of perfect obedience, a life of exceeding great sorrow, and for me didst end it by Thy most bitter Passion and Death. What can I do for Thee, O my Jesus? I will love Thee, O Lord my God, with the love which Thou only canst give me."

II.

So, on Calvary was the sacrifice accomplished. And in the Holy Mass this sacrifice is re-pleaded. Not *repeated!* It never can be

done again. It was done then once, and for all time and people. But in the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass we plead again this Sacrifice.

"But how," you say, "how do we do this?"

You remember the Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau. The people of this village promised our Lord that they would present His Passion every ten years if He would deliver them from a plague. So it is given by the peasant folk. They play the Passion and Death of Jesus.

Now suppose you were watching this play and you noticed how truly these peasants presented our Lord's suffering. It affected you very much. Then, suddenly, as you watched the scene of Calvary, something happened! You saw that it was no longer a villager playing the part of Jesus, but our Lord Himself was there enacting His Passion. He, Himself, it was, not a Bavarian peasant, who was raised up on the cross.

Now this is something like what happens in the Mass. Up to a certain point there is bread and wine. Then comes Jesus, when the words of Consecration are spoken: "This is My body, This is My Blood." Then is lifted up to the Father, not bread and wine, but our dear Lord Jesus Himself, pleading His Pas-

sion before the Father. This is the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Drama of the Redemption!

But, O Christian Soul, are you taking your part in that drama? Do you plead as often as you might this great Sacrifice? Have you not been slothful in coming, have not your steps lagged, your heart grown cold, your lips dumb? Promise Jesus that you will try to be more faithful in pleading His Death. It is the great means of bringing the world back to God. Do your part.

"O most sweet Jesu Who wast raised up on the cross that Thou mightest draw all men unto Thee, I grieve that I have been so seldom at the holy Sacrifice wherein Thou art again presented. Henceforth I will go eagerly and fervently to the holy Mysteries and plead the Blessed Sacrifice for the sins and sorrows of the world."

III.

Our Communions! In the spiritual world the means of power is the Blessed Sacrament. You come to the altar of God for your Communion. The priest puts into your hands Something round and white. Be careful, ah! be very careful, for therein is power! Power to do anything! Power to blast the universe! *But not enough power to blast your will!*

Why is it our Communions bring so few fruits? It is because of self-will. This cannot be blasted away, even by God's power. What does this mean? It means we must stop making our own plans, and being disappointed when we find that God has other plans for us. It means we must stop rebelling against God, stop thinking God has been unfair to us. It means we must stop being resentful, unloving, unkind. It means, in fine, accepting God's Will. Can we do this?

In front of the monastery of the Holy Cross runs the placid Hudson. I am told that if you want a pleasant day on the river, you will push out from the shore and fall into the wake of one of the many long river tows which go slowly up and down the stream. The suction of the barges will draw you along without any effort of your own, other than keeping in the wake. So it is with our Lord. You must push out from the narrow shore of your self-will, and get into the wake of Jesus. Once there, you will be drawn along surely, smoothly, tenderly, along the river of the Precious Blood of Jesus.

Can you do this? What have you denied to the Will of God? Give Him this one thing and your Communion will be powerful. Say the *Our Father.*

GETHSEMANE

Read St. Luke xxii: 39-54 and St. Mark xiv: 41-50.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

LIFT up your heart to your suffering Saviour. You are to meditate on the Passion of the Son of God. Why did He suffer? It was because of His love for you. He laid down His life for you. In this and the following meditations try to realize that all was borne for you. Therefore, make an act of love to Jesus. If you rightly contemplate His Passion, you cannot fail to do this, so greatly will His love inflame your love. "How great is Thy love for me, O dear Redeemer, for that Thou didst will for my sake to lead a life of sorrow and to end it by this Thy most bitter Passion and Death. Oh, how greatly hast Thou loved, even unto the death of the cross. I, too, will love Thee, O my God, with all my heart and soul and strength." Say the *Veni Creator*, asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you as He wills. Say the *Our Father* as an act of abandonment. Entreat our Lady's intercession, using the *Hail Mary*.

I.

After the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, our Lord and His disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane. Picture the scene of the Agony. This garden probably belonged to one of our Lord's friends, and Jesus was accustomed to spend His nights in prayer in that enclosure. Its name, which signifies "oil press," reminds us of the spreading olive trees that furnished the oil for the lamps in the Temple. See the Paschal moon shedding a flood of light broken by the branches of the trees and flecking the ground with great patches of black and silver.

In the shadow is Jesus, "withdrawn from the disciples about a stone's cast." These words have sometimes been translated "He tore Himself away from them," to signify the violent act of His will which Jesus had to make to enter upon His agony. See Him prone upon His Face in prayer. Hear His words, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done." See the blood from His forehead dropping to the ground.

Why all this agony of blood and tears? Was it caused by fear of the physical pain?

Was Jesus less brave than the martyrs, than the men and women and children who went singing to their agony? No, He was agonizing over sin, our sin! If we do not appreciate His agony, then miserable are we, for we do not recognize the horror of sin, that horror which increases with holiness. It was most horrible to Him, for dread of sin increases proportionally with growth in holiness.

Imagine the horror and amazement of sin to Him who is holiness itself. The sins of the world are passing in awful procession before Him. Now He shudders at the sin of Cain; now those of Nero rack Him; now the horrors of a world-war.

But see! What is this black band of sin? It is terribly familiar. It is our own sins now which rack the Saviour; our disobedience, our rebellion, our uncharity, our gossip, our ingratitude, our blackness of heart and hatred of our brother without a cause, our selfishness, our sins of omission, our evil thoughts, our covetousness and envy. O let us hasten to make an act of contrition and love.

"My God, I love Thee with all my heart. I grieve and lament that I have brought Thee such pain and agony. Oh, forgive me and save me! May I never wound Thee any more.

Help me in all things to say, Thy will be done."

II.

What is the burden of the Saviour's prayer? "Thy will be done." In the face of all this agony and tears He still prays, "Thy will be done." It was the prayer most often on His lips, it was the prayer of His whole life. Is it your prayer? Do you remember the words of Fr. Faber's hymn?—

"I worship thee, sweet Will of God!
And all thy ways adore,
And every day I live I seem
To love thee more and more.

"I have no care, O blessed Will,
For all my cares are thine;
I live in triumph, Lord, for Thou
Hast made Thy triumphs mine.

"Ill that He blesses is our good,
And unblest goods are ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be His sweet Will."

Is this your prayer? Do you really want to do the will of God? Or do you only want to do God's will when it happens to coincide with your own will? Do you love God's will most when it costs you most? Look at the

Saviour kneeling in the shadows, crying, "Nevertheless, Thy will be done." When you see His sorrow, His agony, His bitterness, and hear ringing through all the suffering His steadfast cry, "Thy will be done," you, too, will want to adopt these words as the motto for your life.

Think of something in which you have rebelled against God's will for you. Visualize it clearly in all the suffering it brought and then accept it joyfully for the Saviour's sake.

III.

Look once again at the prostrate Saviour. There in the Garden He is making atonement for your sin, suffering the agony to which the blood and tears testify. It is the Lord's confession of sin; not His sin, but yours which He has assumed. Ponder what suffering it cost.

And there are actually some people who, in the face of this torture of soul and body, in the very sight of His Precious Blood and Holy Tears, in the hearing of His moans of bitter woe, which this confession cost, say, "I cannot make my confession. It is too hard. Jesus would not ask it of me. He has done it for me. He loves me too much to ask such a ter-

rible thing of me. He has opened the way and made it easy for me. He has agonized, that I be spared agony. He has paid the debt, I need not worry about my sins."

Are you one of these people who thus excuse themselves from their confessions, and from all that is painful in the Catholic Religion? But Jesus did not agonize that we might be spared agony. He did not die on the cross that we might be exempt from cross-bearing. He did not die that our life might be made easy. He died to save us from sin and that we may receive the power to take up our cross and follow in His footsteps, that we may not be tempted above that we are able. Were we outside the power of His death we could not bear our cross at all.

He agonized and died to put us into the way of salvation, that we might be able to walk therein. The entrance to that highway of new life is penitence. Jesus does ask for your confession because of His very love for you.

Say, then, to Him: "Dear Lord Jesus, I love Thee for Thy great love for me which led Thee to such bitter sorrow. I accept gladly all the pain and humiliation which my confession will bring me. It is a precious means

of union with Thee. The harder the confession the better, if thereby I may show my new-found love for Thee."

IV.

Look again at the Master! He agonizes not only over the sin of the world, but also over its sorrow. The sorrows of the world! They come in long, seemingly endless procession; sorrows of men and women and children; grief, heart-breaking grief; pain, apparently useless pain; physical pain, mental tortures, nervous fears, suffering of every kind crowd upon Him. Was it not enough that He should bear the sin of the world but that He should also desire to bear its suffering? Ask yourself, then, Have I helped to bear another's sorrow? What share have I borne in the suffering of my Lord and His children? Have I watched with Him, or have I slept? What part have I had in the Passion? Have I believed for those who doubted, have I had faith for the unbelieving, have I hoped for the despairing, have I loved for the selfish, sorrowed for the sick? Have I welcomed pain and suffering for the sake of others?

What part have I had in the Passion of the Son of God?

Say to Him, "O my Blessed Jesus, who in

order that Thy Passion might be the more bitter didst bear the sorrows of the world, I grieve that I have been so cold and unmindful. Forgive me for my lack of sympathy. If it be Thy gracious will give me a share in the pain of Thy Cross. Whatever of grief Thou sendest me, that will I welcome, Lord, and suffer it for Thee."

V.

But hark! What is that sound of voices at the entrance of the garden? The flash of torches breaks in upon the shadows as Judas and his band approach. See the Saviour calmly rising. His hour has come. "Behold," He says, "the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand." Quietly He goes to meet the multitude with their swords and staves. Judas does not lose time in identifying his victim. Our Lord stands out from His disciples awaiting the act of betrayal. Judas comes up to Jesus. He kisses Him. So is God betrayed, and by the most sacred sign of love!

Ask yourself again, "Have I ever betrayed the Master?" You are far closer to Jesus even than Judas was. You have been grafted into Him, you have been confirmed in Him,

you have often been fed by His Body, you have been pardoned by His Precious Blood, you have been given a share in His Cross. Think! Have you ever given the kiss of betrayal? If you are false to Him, if you commit wilful sin, if you are disloyal, if you refuse to witness for Him, if you indulge yourself "only a minute," think! It took "only a minute" to give the fatal kiss! Hasten to fall at His feet and kiss them over and over again. So, as He comes out of the garden, as He is led away to the death of the Cross, you will comfort Him and He will be well content, for He has won you.

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him;
The little gray leaves were kind to Him;
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last:
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last,
When out of the woods He came."*

*Sidney Lanier.

THE SCOURGING

Read St. John xix: 1.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

REMIND yourself of Jesus as the Saviour of the world, and ponder the wonder and joy of His Presence. "In Thy Presence is the fulness of joy; and at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore." Make an act of trust in the purpose of the Holy Ghost for you in this meditation. Ask Him to guide you, saying the *Veni Creator.* Make an act of abandonment, saying the *Our Father.* Entreat the prayers of the Mother of Sorrows, saying the *Hail Mary.*

I.

After meditating on the Agony and Betrayal, we follow our Lord through His Passion. So we come to the scourging which Pilate ordered when Jesus was brought back to him, hoping thereby to move the mob to compassion. Protest to our Lord that it is your purpose to be with Him, devoutly, lovingly, through His Passion; that you will ponder earnestly the two things which the Cross reveals, the love of God and the sin of man; that you will make many acts of sorrow and

contrition and love. Offer your heart's love to your Lord, promising to follow Him in His Passion by your own personal devotions.

II.

Picture the scene in the barrack yard of the Pretorium. See the soldiers standing round; Jesus apart by himself, the object of scorn and contempt. See the four executioners step forward and strip Jesus of His raiment. He stands before the jeering rabble. Think what an act of love it was for Him to accept the shame, the shame which in Him was so great because He was purity itself.

Meditate upon His sense of shame, His humility, His exceeding great love. Make an act of responsive love to Him. Shame is the bulwark against many a sin. Pray for the fire of holy purity, the purity which is not merely a negative matter, a resisting of unholy thoughts and deeds, but a positive thing, a purity which flames with desire for union with God.

"O God who lovest what is pure, and bringest to light the hidden things of darkness, who wast pleased to dwell in the womb of the most pure Virgin, enkindle in us the fire of Thy love, the fire that shall burn out of us the

dross of our impurity; who livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen."

III.

See the soldiers fastening Jesus to the pillar. See the terrible Roman scourge, laced with bits of steel which cut like rowels into the flesh. The executioners alternately lay on the first strokes. Our Lord's whole body writhes under the blows. Blow follows blow. Jesus is no longer naked. He has now a new mantle, the robe of His Precious Blood. When the strength of the first two executioners fails, they give place to others, who continue to lay on the awful strokes. Witness the patience of Jesus! Oh, is it not enough? Why must they continue! But they cannot stop, one blow is not enough! For it is our repeated sin which falls on Jesus. He, too, pleaded with us to stop, but we would not. He must atone for our continuance, our cruel wilfulness in sin. Every blow we struck Him must here be atoned for. One blow is not enough! What can we do to stop these blows? Let us repent of our sin.

"O Jesus, I repent me of my many, many sins. Have mercy upon me and save me. I will give Thee love for love. O grant that I

may never scourge Thee any more. Away from me, my sins; cruel executioners of my Lord, I have resolved never again to hurt my Jesus."

IV.

Think of the penitence which we owe to Jesus. What is penitence? Consider the stages through which the loving soul must pass before it realizes the true penitence which no longer scourges Jesus?

The first stage in the ladder of penitence is the punishment that must inevitably follow upon wrongdoing. Many have to undergo this punishment to bring them to God. Perhaps if the penitent thief had been pardoned by the earthly judge, he never would have gained Paradise. It is not a very high degree of penitence. The punishment comes to men whether they will or no. But make an act of contrition that your punishment may bear fruit, as it did to the thief.

"I will bear Thine anger, O Lord, for I have sinned against Thee. By Thy scourging, have mercy and forgive."

A slightly higher degree is that of social punishment. Fear of social ostracism keeps many a man from gross sin. Poltroonery, unrestrained passion, open dishonesty in busi-

ness, have their own penalties. We should pray that God may use the fear of men's censure to further His work for our souls.

"I fear the scorn of my fellow-sinners. How shall I stand before the face of the all-righteous Judge of all?"

Remorse! It is another stage of mental humiliation in the thought of what we are in our own sight. When we pity self for sins, instead of pitying Jesus; when we are sorry for self, instead of being sorry for Him; when we hate self, instead of hating Satan; when temptations to bitterness and despair crowd around, let us think how we are putting self in the place of Jesus. Then let us pray that our remorse may be turned into penitence; that each of us may be a St. Peter, not a Judas.

"Make me, O Lord, willing to be trodden under foot, to suffer anything rather than to increase Thy pain. Have mercy and forgive."

Then, there is, God be praised, true sorrow for sin. This is where real penitence begins. A mountain lad defined contrition as "a lump in your throat." So it is, very often. The sight of the pain of Jesus moves hardened sinners to tears.

"O Jesus, I grieve at Thy pain, at Thy woe. Have mercy and forgive."

But we may not always *feel* sorrow. So we come to meditate on the highest degree of contrition, the contrition of the will. We may not always feel contrition, it is often better that we should not. To stop the scourging requires not feelings, but acts. Acts of contrition are necessary,—the penitence of the will. Do I want to be sorry for my sins? In the power of the Passion I may, at any time and under any condition, make an act of the will to be contrite. These forced acts of contrition, when I deliberately say, "O Jesus, for Thy sake and for Thy sake only, I will to be sorry for Thy pain;" these acts when I lay aside all thoughts of self and think only of Jesus; these acts, made in the agony of temptation, in the depth of suffering, aye, in the moment after sin, are most pleasing to Jesus. These resolutions to be penitent are those which stop the executioners from their cruel work. Oh, let us hasten, then, to make an act of contrition which will send the torturers away in sudden terror, which will cut the bonds that tie the Hands of Jesus to the pillar, which will staunch the gaping wounds.

"O most meek Jesus, bound to a pillar and cruelly scourged for my sins, I grieve over my sins with all the love Thou sendest me, with

all the strength Thou givest me. With all my will, I will to be contrite; I will to make the act of penitent love which will set Thee free. For Thy sake I am sorry, for Thy sake I resolve never to sin again, for Thy sake I beg Thee to bind me to Thy Heart, with the bands of a man, with the cords of love. Take my heart, my will, my life, my all. So shall I be ever Thine, and Thou forever mine."

THE CROWN OF THORNS

Read St. Matthew xxvii: 27-31.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

LIFT up your heart to the Saviour of your body and soul. Try to realize how much of love it cost the Lord to redeem your soul. Think of the Passion, how great, how overpowering it is in the vastness of its burning love. Surely when you understand but a little of that love for you which "loved unto the uttermost" you will make an answering act of love. Make an act of faith in the power of the Passion to save you. "In Thee, O Lord, and in the merits of Thy Passion, have I put my trust." Say the *Our Father* as an act of submission to the divine will. Say, too, the *Veni Creator* and *Hail Mary*.

I.

You have thought of three scenes in the Passion; the Agony, the Betrayal, and the Scourging. Think now of the mockery of the soldiers, which followed immediately upon the Scourging. Try to picture the scene. Imagine it as in a basement, underground. A

few sputtering torches shed a flickering light over the room. In the middle of the room smokes a brazier of coals. Make an act of love to the Saviour who is to endure this suffering.

"O Jesu, come to me with Thy love and pour out Thyself upon me, the chief of sinners."

To this guard-room the soldiers drag our Lord, broken with the terrible scourging. "He said He was a king," they cry. "A throne for the King!" They thrust Him down on a low seat. "A robe, a robe for our King," and some one picks up a cloak and flings it over Him. For a scepter a broken reed is thrust into His hands. A crown only is wanting. Some cruel hands weave a circlet of a thorny bramble and press it down upon His weary head. See how the Blood gushes out afresh, and, running down His Face, fills His eyes. Can you see Him there, O lover of Jesus, sitting in the place of scorn, clad in a purple robe, with the reed in His hands, the cruel thorns on His Head, and the Blood pouring down into His eyes? Can you see Him? Hasten to make an act of contrition and love. "O my Lord Jesu, how great is my sin; how wonderful Thy love. O make me love Thee more and more."

II.

See, now, the soldiers marshalling the servants. They pass before Him in mock worship. See them bend the knee. Hear them as they taunt Him, "Hail, King of the Jews, all hail!" And now some of them smite Him, and worst of all, they spit in His Face, they spit in the Face of God!

Suppose it had been you who sat there, with the robe over your aching shoulders, the reed in your hands, the torturing thorns piercing your throbbing head? Suppose it had been you whom they mocked and struck? Suppose it had been you in whose face they spit? You who felt the blood upon your face? Would you have sat there so quietly without flinching? . . . But no, it was not you, it was God! Renew your acts of contrition and love.

"O Christ my King, I hail Thee as my Life and Lord. I will seat Thee on the throne of my heart, I will crown Thee with the love of my life; I will give unto Thee the rule of my will. O Thou who wast crowned with thorns and robed in purple mockery, accept the sorrow and love of my heart."

III.

Look once more at the Saviour. Can you still see Him, in the purple robe with the reed

and cruel crown? Can you see the taunting soldiers striking Him? And what is in His heart? What is He thinking of as they strike Him? What is His desire?

Amid the curses Jesus is thinking but one thing. How he loves these people—each and every one. He is saying, "How I love them all. I hate their terrible sin, but how I love their souls. That man who has just cursed Me, that boy who is going to strike Me, how I love him! I am theirs, let them do with Me what they will. But how I wish that one of them, if not all, yet just one of them, would stop his wild work, his brutal laughter, and come and kneel down before Me, and say, 'Lord, I am sorry, take me.' If not all of them, yet that even one would come and throw aside the crowd and give himself to Me!"

What would you have done if you had been present at the mockery? Would you not have burst through the cursing throng, flung them to left and right, would you not have knelt at His feet and tenderly wiped away the Blood and spittle? Would you not have said, "Lord, I am sorry?"

Say: "I can be that one. Is it I whom Jesus is calling to-day?" For though in body the Saviour is no longer mocked, though it

happened hundreds of years ago, yet to-day in spirit He is derided. His Passion has lasted nearly two thousand years. To-day the Saviour is seated on a throne of mockery. To-day He is clad in purple, with reed and cruel crown. Ask yourself: "Am I among the mockers? Is it I who give but a show of worship, I who smite Him with my sins. I who am unmindful of His sufferings, is it I whom Jesus is calling?"

IV.

Do you still linger, still hesitate to kneel at His feet? What is it which keeps you back, what is it which binds you so that you cannot come to Him, no matter how great your desire? Is it a favorite sin, something which you have clung to lo these many years? You know it is wrong. Perhaps you say some day you will give it up. "Some day, but not now." Do not say, "I cannot help it, it is my temperament." *Temperament* is often just another way of spelling *temptation.* Realize it as something that you *can* give up, if you only love enough. Renounce the sin. Face the temptation. Do not excuse yourself any longer. Do not say, "Oh, anything but that, I can't give that up." You *can* and you *will.*

Remember the Lord's Passion. Look at the love in His Face for you. Can you resist it? No. never, for that love will conquer. Then lay your sin at His feet. What are you doing as you put it from you once and forever? You are dashing aside the cruel mockers, you are stopping the hideous curses, you are soothing the agony of God, you are at His feet loving Jesus. Make an act of love to Jesus, loving Him for His great love wherewith He hath loved you.

THE ECCE HOMO

Read St. John xix: 4-7.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

LIFT up your heart. By an act of your will, realize the Presence of the Man of Sorrows. Hear Him cry to you, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." Make an answering act of love to Jesus. "O my Saviour, what is sweeter than love, what safer, what more satisfying? Why is not my heart pierced as is Thy Heart? Thy love surrounds me on all sides and yet I comprehend it not. Fill me more and more with Thy love and with the power of Thy Cross and Passion, O Jesus, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer." Say the *Veni Creator* as an act of faith in the Holy Ghost's guiding power. Repeat the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*.

I.

Try to bring before you the scene of the showing of Christ to the people, the "Ecce Homo." It is after the Scourging and the Mockery. The soldiers are bringing Jesus back to the court-room. Only a comparative few had witnessed His suffering at the pillar

and in the guard cell. Now Pilate brings our Lord out on a balcony and shows Him to the people.

See Jesus standing before the multitude, clad in the mocking garment, the soldier's cloak; the crown of thorns still on His bleeding Head; the reed, His scepter, in His hands; His limbs all racked; His Body trembling with the cold; His loving Face looking with searching eyes at you. Surely this sight will move the people to mercy. Surely it will touch their hearts. So thinks Pilate as he presents Jesus to the people, crying "Ecce Homo," "Behold, the Man."

"Behold, the Man." What does it mean? It means, "Behold the fatal results of compromise." Pilate knows that Jesus is innocent. But he dares not release Him for fear of the Jews. Pilate knows that if they can find any accusation against him as governor, his days in Palestine are numbered. There has been too much suspicion directed against him already. He must play a safe game. As he considers his danger he resorts to a compromise. He will not kill this Man; he will scourge Him and so excite the pity of the Jews that they will demand His release. But what happens? The multitude are all the

more enraged at the sight of Jesus. Hear them cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

Look, then, at the fearful results of compromise. "Ecce Homo." Compromise scourges Jesus, mocks Him. "Behold, the Man," Pilate cries. "Have pity upon Him. He surely can do no harm. Let Him go now that He has been so beaten." But, Pilate, you may not stop now. You must crucify Him. Behold the results of your compromise with sin. Make an act of sorrow to the suffering Jesus.

"My Jesus, mocked and put to scorn, tortured and bleeding, with all my heart I grieve over Thy pain. Give me courage to be wholly loyal to fill my heart more and more with love for Thee, O my God!"

II.

"Behold, the Man." Behold the dreadfulness of sin! Have you ever treated sin lightly? Have you ever said with Pilate, "I will not crucify, but I will scourge and stop there?" You do that if you say in your heart, "I will commit just this little sin; it is only venial, surely it will hurt no one." You thought only to scourge Him, but there comes the terrible cry, "Crucify, crucify." When once you have begun to play with sin, you can-

not stop. Venial sin, persisted in, leads to mortal sin. Scourging Jesus precedes His crucifixion. Compromising with the world, the flesh and the devil, leads to worse sins, undreamed-of sins. Are you indulging in little sins? Consider how you are preparing to crucify Jesus.

III.

"Behold, the Man." Think, too, of compromise in other matters than sin. Think of how the Catholic Faith is being compromised daily. To how many is the Catholic Religion a *vital* matter, a thing which concerns their *life?* Are you always loyal to the Faith and to its practice? Are you never ashamed of it? Do you carry it with you into your daily life, do you live by it? How much would you miss it if you had it not? When you choose your summer residence, is your first question, "Is there a church there?" Do you carry your religion with you on your holiday? Do you let scoffers shame you into neglecting it? Does your attendance at Mass and Communion stand the August heat? Have you ever allowed ridicule to break your Friday fast? Are you afraid to pray in the presence of strangers? Examine your life to see how far

it includes the Catholic Religion, or how far it is eclectic, your own compromise.

IV.

"Behold, the Man." You have seen the terrible results of sin. Now consider these words in another sense. "Behold, the Man." Behold what manner of love He has who suffers so for you. Can you realize the import of St. Paul's words, "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*?" Behold this Man and His sacrifice, made for love of you. Behold Him who "having loved His own He loved them unto the uttermost." Where will you find greater love, where will you go to find a love which is not as a shadow of the night in comparison with this fiery blazing sun of love? Remember that all this love is for you. Give thanks and rejoice in the love of Jesus for you! Say His holy Name many times.

V.

"Behold, the Man." You have thought of these words as speaking to you of the sin of man and again as revealing the love of God. Now they are to speak to you of your conduct in the light of this sin and this love. "Behold, the Man." Yes, behold Him, look steadily at

Him, turn your eyes to the most beautiful of the sons of men. The world is loud in its demand for manhood. It must learn that there is but one Manhood and that is the Manhood of Christ. All other manhood is but a faint reflection of that "Divine Manhood." Jesus is the one, true, perfect Man. As you think of your sin and as you begin to grasp His love, what will you not want to do for Him? Do you remember the words of the Breviary hymn for a martyr?—

> "For Thee through many a woe he ran,
> In many a fight he played the man."

"He played the Man." Now you will play His part. Perhaps in days past you played the part of a great character in a drama, Hamlet, Portia, or some other rôle. Do you remember how carefully you studied the part, how zealously you looked up the local color?

Now you are to play the Man. Will you be less eager to perform this part well? Will you spend less time over His Character? Will you be less diligent in effacing your own feebleness so as to portray the better the life you have chosen? Study then your new rôle. "Behold, the Man." See how He played it. Remember that His whole life leads up to the

Passion. He lived in order to die. Will you live to die? Will you take up your cross daily, remembering that bearing the cross means primarily obedience to the will of God? Will you try to play the Man on all occasions, and not just when it is pleasing to you to do so? Will you be especially joyful and happy in your rôle when it means "playing the fool for Christ's sake?" (See 1 Cor. iv: 10.)

The *Imitation* says: "Thou must be made a fool for Christ's sake if thou desire to lead a religious life." Are you willing to be accounted a fool by those who do not believe the Catholic Religion? But do not be discouraged at the many requirements. "Behold, the Man." Jesus has done it all for you, so that it may be possible for you to do it in Him. Look at Him, and all will be easy and sweet. For all is well nigh accomplished when you tell Jesus that you take up your cross, that you want to do His will, come what may. The will of God is sweet and the yoke of Christ easy. Will you play this part?

THE CRUCIFIXION

Read St. Luke xxiii: 32-46.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

LOOK at your crucifix and think of the first crucifix on Mount Calvary. He who hung there in bitter woe is present in your heart. Lift, then, your thoughts to Jesus and make an act of worship to Him. "Hear me, O Lord, when I cry unto Thee. O Saviour, who didst say, 'I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me,' draw me unto Thee. I worship Thee, O Magnet of souls. Draw me ever nearer unto Thee, and receive my soul, O Blessed Jesus, Thou King and Saviour Divine." Say the *Veni Creator* that the Holy Spirit may speak to you of Jesus and His glory. Say the *Our Father,* asking that in all things, but especially in this meditation, you may do the Father's will. "O Jesu, Light of my life, Thou hast said, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' I know this is true and so I turn mine eyes unto Thee. Now I see Thee through a glass darkly, but I hope to see Thee in all the glory of Thy Sacred Humanity. Fulfill my hope, O my God."

I.

After the "Ecce Homo," Jesus is dragged away to be crucified. Follow Him along the terrible way of the Cross and up the hill of Calvary. "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left." A few words and yet what agony they describe! Try to see the soldiers as they throw Jesus down upon the cross. See them stretch out His hands and feet to the extremities of the rood. Hear the blows of the hammer on the spikes. So is Jesus lifted up that He might draw you to Himself. Love brought Jesus to this world, Love drove Him to His Passion, Love led Him to the Garden of Agony, Love sustained Him on the Way of Sorrow, Love held Him to the cross. Love of you wrought all this wondrous mystery. Make an act of love to Jesus, telling Him of your great love for Him, and for His own sweet sake.

II.

Look now at the three crosses against the darkening sky. There was, first of all, the cross of the impenitent thief. What effect did that cross have upon him? It embittered him,

it angered him, it gave him a grievance against God. "If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us." There are many such in the world, proud, unyielding, sinful souls who grow daily more bitter, more un-Christlike. You yourself know them, unloving, ugly-tempered people. Think definitely of some of them, recall vividly their names, their lives, their distress. Make an act of sorrow for them.

"Look upon them, O Lord, with the eyes of Thy mercy. Alas, their wounds are many, their sickness very grievous! Have mercy upon them and save their souls from endless misery, by the power of Thy Cross and Passion."

III.

Then, there is the cross of the penitent thief. Note that it is the same cross as that which you have just been considering; the same cross, but what a different effect! His cross made him realize his sin and the justice of his punishment. "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." His cross did not harden him, it softened him. His cross did not anger him, it converted him. His cross did not bring him a curse, but the greatest blessing a man can have, the joy of companionship with Jesus. Ask Jesus to give you that benediction of comradeship.

"O Jesus, first-born among many brethren, make me a fellow-heir and companion with Thee in the Paradise of Thy joy."

IV.

What was it which made the difference? Why should the same cross embitter one and sweeten the other? It was because of the third cross, for the third cross bore Jesus. To the third cross the impenitent thief had paid no attention save to curse. But the penitent thief had been watching this cross and the Man it bore.

The Face fascinated him. Somehow it was so different from all the other faces he had ever seen. That strange Man there had not rebelled against the cross, had not resented the nails, had tried not to wince as the heavy beam was dropped into its socket. In answer

to the cries of derision which greeted the raising of this third cross, He had cried, "Father, forgive them."

So the penitent thief had watched the Face of Jesus. And as he watched something happened within. The loving, gentle Face broke down his pride, his resentment, his self-will. So it was that he turned to his Saviour and cried, "Lord, remember me!" And, ringing out, clear as a trumpet call, came the answer. "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise!"

What a wondrous Face it is indeed. To the one who looks not, there remained anger, defeat, bitterness, death. To the other who looked in adoring wonder at that Face there, came joy, peace, life, companionship. Worship that Face of Jesus, saying, "We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world!"

V.

What is your cross doing to you? Is it sweetening your life, making you more gentle, more yielding, more loving? Or is it angering you, embittering you? Look for the Face of Jesus. It is there if you but look for it. Our Lord never sends you a cross, without

coming Himself with it and offering you His strength with which to bear it. If you do not look for that Face you will become hard, unyielding, selfish, a traitor to the cross. If you do look for it, you will become gentle, kind, a comrade-in-arms!

VI.

A comrade-in-arms! That is what you want to be, a comrade with the Saviour on His cross, a true penitent. But think carefully what that involves.

There is a popular saying, "If you're good, you'll be lonesome!" It is perfectly correct! Lonesome! Just like Jesus on the cross when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Are you willing to share that lonesomeness? You must, if you want to be His comrade-in-arms. All will desert you, a dear friend will betray you, "mine own familiar friend whom I trusted"; many will mock you, all will abandon you on your cross—save One! For only One could say, "I have trodden the wine-press alone." You cannot say that, for He is with you, the unseen Comrade.

Have you been lonesome, deserted, betrayed, mocked? Rejoice, for you are enter-

ing into His Passion! Rejoice at the busy mockers, the gossips, the unkind remarks, the cruel words, for you are at last sharing His Passion! Rejoice at your cross (what is it?), for you are crucified with Jesus. And fail not to do what the penitent thief did—look for His Face—so shall your lonesomeness be sweet companionship. So shall you hear His words: "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

Say the words of the thief several times, slowly and lovingly, "Lord, remember me."

"God the Father give us grace
To walk in the light of Jesu's Face;
God the Son give us a part
In the hiding place of Jesu's Heart;
God the Spirit so hold us up
That we may drink of Jesu's cup;
God Almighty, God Three in One,
God Almighty, God alone."*

*Christina G. Rossetti.

THE RESURRECTION

Read St. John xx: 1-18.

✝ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

LIFT up your heart to the Risen Saviour. Make an act of joy to Him. "The Lord is my strength and shield; my heart hath trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart danceth for joy, and in my song will I praise Him." Say the *Our Father*, the *Veni Creator*, and the *Hail Mary*. Ask God, not only to speak to you this day of His will for you, but to give you grace to keep your resolution.

"Almighty God, who through Thine only begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; we humbly beseech Thee that, as by Thy special grace preventing us Thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God world without end."

I.

Picture the scene. It is in the chill before the dawn, the Sunday after the Day of the

Crucifixion. The Lord has been laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. He is dead! Dead! But the heart of Mary Magdalene cannot rest. He is dead! But she must go to the grave. See her going in loving haste to the garden where He is laid. She comes to the tomb. Sadly she turns her eyes to the entrance. Why, what is this? The great stone has been rolled away! Have they stolen away His Body? Could they not let Him rest even in death?

See her now gripped by a new fear, running to tell Peter and John. See them stare at her, then start for the sepulchre. They hasten, then break into a run. John, the younger, outruns Peter. Yes, the stone is away! He stoops down and looks in. Jesus is gone! There are the linen grave-clothes. See Peter hastening up; all out of breath. True to his impetuous nature, he goes in! Here are the linens which bound the sacred Body. Over there is the napkin from the Head. But He is gone! Where? How? They knew not, but you know. He is risen! Jesus is risen! Join your joy to that which later on that day came to the Apostles. "O glorious, risen Saviour, my heart rejoiceth in Thy

Resurrection. May I always live as risen with Thee. Blessed be the Name of the Lord!"

II.

The two Apostles hurry back to the city. They have forgotten the Magdalene. See her now approaching. She cannot rest while doubt hangs over the fate of His Body. She does not think of resurrection, she only knows of the empty tomb. See her leaning against the stone doorway, wiping away her tears. She stoops down to look in, gazing into the gloom. What are those forms? Two angels in white greet her. "Woman, why weepest thou?" "Because they have taken away my Lord." She can think of nothing else. Jesus is gone! Have you ever so wept over losing Jesus? When you sinned, did the tears of your contrition flow? Was your only thought, "He is gone?" Did you hasten to receive absolution? Make an act of sorrow for your sins.

III.

As Mary speaks, she feels another Presence. She turns round. She "sees Jesus, but knows not that it is Jesus." He speaks. "Mary." To her it is a loving call to life and joy and rapture. See the new life surging up in her

soul. She falls at His feet. "Rabboni, my Master." She had not known Him. But He had come to her even though she had not recognized Him.

It was to her, Mary, the repentant sinner, that He first appeared. Such is His love for sinners. His first appearance was not to His Apostles, not to John, not even to His Blessed Mother. His first greeting and care was for a weeping sinner. What comfort does this not bring to you, a sinner, sorrowing with love for Jesus!

IV.

Think how slow men are to recognize the risen Saviour. Mary, steeped in love for Jesus, did not recognize Him. You, full of desire to serve Jesus, so often fail to recognize Him. "But," you say, "if He were to come into my house, if He were to manifest Himself, if I could see Him, surely I should recognize Him." But we must remember that we really do not know people because we see their faces or watch their outward movements. There are people whom we have seen every day for years and yet we are ignorant of them. We know nothing of the inner conflict of their lives, the failures and the triumphs, the bitter

tragedies, the hidden joys, the splendid aspirations, the patient courage, the dauntless facing of some terrible destiny. If we knew these things, and could appreciate them, we should see their outward form transformed in our eyes. But so long as we do not, we have no real knowledge of the persons, and no clue by which to recognize the real character that is theirs.

So is it with our Blessed Lord. It is only as we, by His Spirit, grow like Him that we come to such a knowledge of His love that we can discern Him at the bottom of every heart, striving to manifest Himself in each life, seeking to reveal His tenderness, His patience, His strength in the very rudest and worst.

That is what the Saints have done. They so entered into the Mind of Christ that they were able to see Him under whatever form He appeared. This gave them their marvelous compassion for those whom the world disregarded and despised.

Do you, then, try to enter into the Mind of Christ. Do you pray that you may be able to recognize Him as He comes to you day by day.

V.

Think of some of our Lord's other appearances and note how men did not recognize Him. Meditate on His coming to the disciples as they were fishing. (St. John xxi: 1-7.) When Jesus stood on the shore, "*the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*" To whom did He come this time? To people engaged in everyday work.

Once more, think of our Lord's appearance to the two on the road to Emmaus (St. Luke xxiv: 13-35). It was to people on a journey that our Lord came. "But their eyes were holden *that they should not know Him.*" It was only in the breaking of bread that He was known of them.

Make an act of joy that He *was* known of them. They were slow, but they *did* recognize Him.

VI.

To whom, then, did the risen Lord appear? To a sinner, to men at their work, to people journeying. Have you confessed yourself a sinner and found Jesus? You will not find Him till you do confess your sin. What is your sin? Think carefully just what it is. It may not be adultery or murder or grand lar-

ceny. But it may be a tale of gossip, a grudge or unloving attitude towards someone, a harsh word. Whatever it is, take it to Jesus, and then you will recognize your need of your Saviour, you will hasten to meet Him, and He will call you lovingly by name. Say His Name three times. Say as Mary did: "Master, Master, Master."

The risen Saviour appeared to men at their work. Have you seen Him in your work, in your office, in your housework? He was there, did you recognize Him? The risen Saviour lives in that child you were unkind to, in the companion whom you made unhappy this morning. Make a resolution to look for Him in the people working with you. Say the *Our Father.*

The risen Master appeared to men on a journey. Did you see Him on your way down town to-day? Did you see Jesus in the conductor you were curt to, in the poor woman you jostled, in the man whose question you did not answer graciously? He was there. Did you recognize Him?

VII.

Another picture of how the Saviour lives in those about us. Read St. Matthew xxv:

31-46. How about that woman you criticized? You did it unto Him! How about that man you said unfair things about? You did it unto Him! How about that pupil you were impatient with? "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me!" Make an act of sorrow for not recognizing the Saviour in His children. To whom were you ungenerous? Tell Jesus you are sorry you were so unloving. "Oh Jesus, I love Thee in Thy children, and I want to love Thee more."

VIII.

So you must seek Jesus in your daily life. Wash the dishes for Him, set the table for Him, sweep out a room for Him, add up your accounts for Him, look for Him on the way home, in the lanes and streets, in the poor and sick and outcast. He lives again in them.

"Loud mockers in the roaring street
Say Christ is crucified again:
Twice pierced His gospel-bearing feet;
Twice broken His great Heart in vain.
I hear and to myself I smile
For Christ talks with me all the while.

"No angel now to roll the stone
From off His unawaking sleep,

In vain shall Mary watch alone,
In vain the soldiers vigil keep.
Yet while they deem my Lord is dead
My eyes are on His shining head.

"Ah, nevermore shall Mary hear
That voice exceeding sweet and low
Within the garden calling clear:
Her Lord is gone and she must go.
Yet all the while my Lord I meet
In every London lane and street.

"Poor Lazarus shall wait in vain
And Bartimæus still go blind,
The healing hem shall ne'er again
Be touched by suffering humankind.
Yet all the while I see them rest,
The poor and outcast on His breast.

"No more unto the stubborn heart
With gentle knocking shall He plead,
No more the mystic pity start,
For Christ twice dead is dead indeed.
So in the street I hear men say,
Yet Christ is with me all the day."*

*Richard Le Gallienne.

THE ASCENSION

Read St. Luke xxiv: 50-53 and Acts i: 9-11.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

LIFT up your heart to your ascended Lord. Make an act of love to Him. "O Jesus, Life of my life, whom have I in heaven but Thee? And what is there in earth that I desire in comparison of Thee? O make me love Thee more and more." Say the *Our Father*, the *Veni Creator*, and the *Hail Mary*. Give thanks to God the Father for the Ascension of His only-begotten Son. Say the *Gloria Patri*.

I.

Picture the scene. Jesus has led the disciples to the oft-frequented Bethany, to the place from which He had made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. From here He would make His final entry into the heavenly Jerusalem. No doubt they had many questions to ask, many words of endearment to say to Him. But the look on His Face forbade them. As they gazed upon Him, He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

How solemn must have been that last blessing! What He said we know not. There was

joy enough to know that He remembered them at the last moment. See Jesus raising both hands to bestow His fullest benediction upon them. See the little group falling on their knees to receive His gift. Kneel in spirit with them. Ask Jesus to bless you, too, abundantly and with both hands.

"O most blessed Lord Christ, by the love with which Thou liftedst up Thy hands upon the cross to gain for me eternal beautitude, I beseech Thee at this moment to lift up Thy hands upon me and bless me with Thy heavenly benediction."

II.

"While they beheld, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight." A cloud of darkness had covered Him in the bitterest hour of His Passion and now a cloud receives Him in the richest hour of His Triumph. How different the impression produced by those two clouds, yet they both spoke of victory.

A cloud settles down upon your life. But God knows it is there; more than that, He permits it to be there. Has He ever dealt with you other than lovingly? Look back over your life. Think of its most bitter moments.

Recall vividly the hours of disappointment. Were not the ones which seemed so black, so hard, so unnecessary, just the ones which eventually you saw had brought to you the fullest blessings? It was so with Jesus in His Passion; it was so with you in your passion. And as His life on earth closed in a glorious cloud, be assured that yours will be enveloped in like manner. Make, then, an act of confidence in God's will for you. If there is a cloud on your life at this moment, rejoice in it. It is part of His loving, tender will for you. You may not understand now, but make an act of the will accepting it.

"O God, send me what Thou willest. Dispose of my lot, my time, my happiness, my life, and my death. Thou art my Lord and my Master. I have abandoned the past to Thy mercy, I now commit the present to Thy love, and the future to Thy care. I have no will but Thine, for I know Thou lovest me better than I love myself. Into Thy hands I commend my spirit. To Thee I abandon my hopes and fears, my desires and repugnances, my weakness and need. Though temptation should assail, still will I hope in Thee. Though I have often broken my resolutions, I will look to Thee now for grace to keep them. Though

Thou strike me with death, yet will I trust in Thee, for Thou art my God and my ascended Saviour."

III.

"So we may in heart and mind thither ascend and with Him continually dwell." When you were a child you sometimes played a game called "Follow the leader." It consisted in choosing a leader, the most daring and the most adventurous, and in following him wheresoever he went. Do you remember how you ran over hill and meadow? Wherever the leader dared to go, there you went too, lest you should be taunted as "afraid."

That game of childhood has become the vocation of life. You have promised, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest." Recall where He has led. First of all He led you to a stable and bade you look at the Christ-Child in His poverty. Many have seen that vision and have taken courage. It is told of the women of Nazareth that when they were all weary and discouraged they would say, one to another, "Come, let us go and look upon the Face of Mary's Child." You followed to that manger. You said that you, too, could bear poverty gladly for the sake of your

Leader; you could be poor in this world's goods; you could be poor in spirit.

Then your Leader hurried you away from Nazareth into the desert there to learn the lesson of parting from home and loved ones. You said you could follow there; you responded to your vocation.

Again, He toiled, this time slower but none the less surely, up a hill to practise the "obedience unto death." Perhaps your heart began to fail you here, but you took courage when you saw the bleeding footmarks before you. You said, "I too will be obedient. Into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Then, perhaps, you thought it was all over, you had followed even unto the death. What more could He ask? Ah, He asks a great deal more. Your life has just begun. For now He ascends into Heaven and with wound-marked Hands beckons you to follow. He asks that you "thither ascend and with Him continually dwell." Can you still follow? You can, else why did Christ die?

Consider carefully just what it means to "thither ascend and continually dwell." It means that your every act and word and thought will be what it is in heaven. It means no more self-will, no more uncharitable words,

no more discontent, no more temper, no more grudging, no more ingratitude. It means perfect love and worship and joy. Will you make an act of will to try thither to ascend? Say the Collect for Ascension Day.

IV.

Picture now the joy in heaven at our Lord's home-coming. See the hosts of heaven rushing to greet Him as He returns bearing the spoils of His Passion. See the angels and the arch-angels bending before Him, and the seraphs burning with love for Him. Hear the shout of triumph welcoming the King as He comes.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory: even the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."

THE VISION OF LOVE

Read Revelation i: 10-18.

✠ *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen.*

REMIND yourself of the Presence of your ascended Saviour, Jesus the great High Priest, who intercedes for you constantly in heaven. He is always lifting up His holy Hands for you, as an act of supplication on your behalf, showing His wounds, now glorified, to the Father. As you think of Jesus ever pleading for you, pray that He may come more and more into your heart. Say the Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity, that the love of God may call forth your love for Him. Say, too, the *Our Father* and the *Veni Creator*. And, remembering that at the right hand of our Lord, in the highest place among His members, is the Mother of God, our blessed Lady Mary, say the *Hail Mary* in her honor.

I.

Lift up your eyes to the Vision of our Lord in glory. His human life was not ended when Jesus went up on high. His humanity is now glorified in heaven. This does not mean that His Sacred Manhood ceases to operate. No,

His human nature is all the more powerful now that He is free from mortal limitations. When on earth He helped those with whom He was. Now He blesses all who are in His mystical Body, who will let Him bring to them His aid.

He wants to bless *you*. Lift up your eyes to the Vision of love, to Jesus glorified. See His arms outstretched to receive you. Cast yourself down before Him, fall at His feet; make many acts of contrition that He may cleanse you from your sin. "O Jesus, wash me in Thy Precious Blood, hide me in Thy Sacred Heart."

Think of the love of Jesus.—of His great love, and of your little love which yet can grow great in Him. Consider some of the characteristics of His love unto death, the love in which at this very instant He is pleading for you, and then the love He gives you with which to love Him.

II.

The love of Jesus is first of all an *operative* love. It is working constantly for you. Jesus is always pleading for you, always seeking by His love for you to win your love for Him. His love for you is never weary, never weak,

never discouraged, never faint of heart, never flagging, never chilled (there is no such thing as a *cold* love), but always burning higher, brighter and stronger. "Love must act as light must shine and fire must burn."

And your love for Jesus must be an *operative* love like His. Your love for Jesus should be a love on which Jesus can ever count, even as you can always count on His love. Ask Jesus to make the love which He lavishes upon you act more and more in calling forth love in you. Plead for more of the love of Jesus that you may pour it out on others as He pours out His love on you. Say the Collect for Quinquagesima.

III.

The love of Jesus is a *gentle* love. It might seem that love would be always gentle. Yet there is a love which is fierce, insatiate, tyrannical. But the love of Jesus is always gentle, patient, tender. He does not thrust Himself upon you. He says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He will not force an entrance. If you will not open He will go away, to wait, that He may be gracious to you in coming yet again. And the tenderness of His love can soften your asperity, not enfeebling you but making your influence on others

stronger and more effective. "Thy gentleness hath made me great."

Is your love a gentle love? If so, your harsh words have ceased, your uncharitable thoughts have faded away, your bitter judgments are gone, your resentments are forgotten, your conversation has lost its argumentative tone, you have become less combative, your life is sweeter and saner. What has wrought this change? Nothing could have done it but the love of Jesus. What has made the Saints so marvelously gentle? It was contact with Jesus. Do you, then, ask Jesus to fan your love into a still brighter flame.

"O Jesus, meek and lowly in Heart, make my heart like unto Thy Heart."

IV.

The love of Jesus is a *persevering* love. "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." His love carried Him on to the garden and the cross. Is your love going to carry you on? In the flush and exaltation of the first days of conversion, in the hours when the glory of the Faith first burst upon you, in the moments after your first confession, it was easy to love Jesus.

Why, there seemed to be no question about it. Of course others may have wavered, but you never would. So you thought. So St. Peter thought. So all fervent neophytes have thought. And all the time the devil was laughing in his sleeve. For he knew of the merciless tests coming, when the first sweet hours had past. Do you love enough to persevere?

In the life of St. Philip Neri we read of a young man who came in the days of his first conversion and said: "Father, if I were sure that I would persevere unto the end, I would live the life of a saint. But I see so many begin and fail that I am afraid that I, too, might not persevere?" St. Philip said: "What would you do if you were sure you would persevere?" The young man answered: "I would say my prayers every day. I would make my examen carefully each night. I would make my confessions and Communions regularly. I would try to do God's will in everything." "Well," said the Saint, "do this every day, keep on doing this, never give up any of these things, and I promise you that you will persevere to the end."

Do you, too, love Jesus enough to persevere to the end? Try to do His will when it is hard as well as when it is easy and sweet.

Pray for love that will be great enough to persevere unto the end.

V.

The love of Jesus is a *self-sacrificing* love. Indeed, sacrifice is love's chief credential, the natural outlet of true love. The love of Jesus was consummated for you upon the cross. And His self-sacrificing love calls for self-sacrificing love in you.

If you love deeply, you will want to give expression to your love in sacrifice. You will find the cross the only adequate exponent of your love. No longer will you murmur at pains and crosses; you have accepted them once for all when you took up your cross, when you made your act of loving surrender. No longer will you be resentful and complaining. Dissatisfaction will have disappeared from your life. No longer will you bear a cross, rather the Cross will bear you, and exalt you to heaven. To lay down your life for your Friend will be your one joy and happiness. Ask Jesus for the love which craves sacrifice.

"Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Thy sake."

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